

Journal of Daoist Studies

Volume 3
2010

Journal of Daoist Studies

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Articles

Affectivity and the Nature of the Sage

Gleanings from A Tang Daoist Master

ALAN K. L. CHAN

Abstract

This essay explores the place of *qing* in conceptions of the nature and being of the sage, focusing on the Tang Daoist master Wu Yun. What it seeks to show is that assumptions about the attainability of “sagehood” and the “nature” (*xing*) of human beings inform the interpretation of *qing*. In this context, the idea that the sage is quintessentially *wuqing*, marked by the absence of desire and emotions, will be examined. I will close with a comparative note on a Confucian account of the same period—namely, the *Fuxing shu* by Li Ao.

In this discussion, I explore the place of “affectivity” (*qing* 情) in the nature and being of the “sage” (*sheng* 聖), focusing on the Tang Daoist master Wu Yun 吳筠 (d. 778), who was highly regarded by his contemporaries, including the emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756) and the poet Li Bai (701–762). Most traditional thinkers recognize that *qing* in its usual sense of desire and emotions constitutes an obstacle to the ideal ethical and spiritual life. Yet, the questions of where the problem lies exactly and how it may be resolved have fueled the dynamic development of Chinese philosophic and religious discourse.

Furthermore, the understanding of *qing* in this context is integrally related to questions about the “nature” (*xing* 性) of human beings and the attainability of “sagehood,” which themselves invite diverse interpretation. At a basic level, conceptions of the nature of the sage cut across partisan intellectual divides, for the same logic of inquiry—though not necessarily the eventual construal, as I hope to show—

applies to both the Confucian sage and the Daoist “immortal” or “transcendent” (*xian* 仙), leaving aside Buddhism in this study.

Although my main concern is not historical but analytic, to make clear as much as possible the philosophical underpinnings of such conceptions, the work of Wu Yun furnishes a helpful focus, for it sets out clearly the key issues that need to be addressed, not only the problem of *qing* but also that of its negation, in the light of the perceived relationship between *qing* and *xing*. To gain a fuller view, I will conclude with a comparative note on a Confucian account of the same period by Li Ao 李翱 (ca. 774–836). The evidence will also show that they are heirs to a long tradition, which necessitates some attention to earlier interrogation of *qing* in the nature and being of the sage.

The Attainability of Sagehood

Wu Yun is well known for his view that the way of the divine immortal can be learned and achieved. In his *Shenxian kexue lun* 神仙可學論 (Discourse on the Attainability of Immortality through Learning),¹ an essay devoted specially to this topic, he challenges in particular the influential argument of Ji Kang 嵇康 (223–262) in his *Yangsheng lun* 養生論 (Discourse on Nourishing Life; see Henricks 1983). The latter asserts that immortality cannot be achieved through study and practice, and that only those blessed with an extraordinarily fine and abundant endowment of *qi* 氣, the energy-like vital substance that creates and sustains life, will be able to become an immortal.

According to Wu, Ji Kang was only partially right because while there are exceptional individuals who are so blessed, for whom “*xian*-hood” would grow naturally out of an inborn “*xian*-ness” and therefore requires no special effort, the majority who are not so blessed can still

¹ This, as all other essays studied here, is contained in Wu Yun’s collected works, the *Zongxuan xianshen wenji* 宗玄先生文集 (Collected Writings of the Master of Ancestral Mystery). Although part of the Daoist Canon (DZ 1051), I use the modern edition by Shanghai guji chubanshe (Shanghai, 1992), abbr. *Zongxuan ji*.

While Wu Yun’s Daoist poetry is the subject of several articles by Edward Schafer (1981; 1982), his essays are the subject of various works, including a recent book-length study, by Jan A. M. De Meyer (1998; 1999; 2000; 2006). His *Xinmu lun* 心目論 (On Mind and Eyes) is the subject of Kohn 1998.

hope to attain *xian* immortality through persistent learning. This is despite the fact that most people do not even recognize the reality of transcendence, let alone achieving it. Borrowing from *Laozi* 41, Wu points out that "those who are of below-average intelligence, when they hear about the Dao would only laugh at it with one another." Indeed, even "those of above-average intelligence" rarely attain the Dao because "they are checked by the teaching of names [i.e., normative Confucian teachings]" and cannot rise above the realm of mundane proprieties. Although when told of the Dao they would have enough sense not to laugh at it with incredulity, they remain unsure of its truth and thus are unable to uphold it firmly. Nevertheless, Wu maintains,

There are those who attained [immortality] not on account of their cultivating learning, [but because] they have been allotted an extraordinary *qi* endowment. There are those who must first devote themselves to learning before they can fulfill [the goal of immortality]; [their success is due to] the sufficiency of their effort and achievement. There are those who pursued learning but failed to obtain [immortality]; [the reason is that] they were diligent at first but grew slack midway and [thus] their sincerity was lacking in the end [which precluded them from attaining immortality]. (*Shenxian kexue lun*)²

The argument is not very precise. On the one hand, Wu seems to be saying that given sufficient effort, all could attain immortality through learning. On the other hand, there is also a hint that those with inferior intellectual capacity would not be able to understand the Dao. The distinction between people with high and low intelligence corresponds with that between men of average (*zhongshi* 中士) and low capacity (*xiashi* 下士), respectively, in *Laozi* 41. This implies that Wu equates the category of high-capacity personages (*shangshi* 上士) in the *Laozi*, who would naturally cultivate the Daoist way of life with unceasing diligence, with those endowed with a special sage or *xian* nature. This also suggests that Wu subscribes generally to a threefold classification of human beings, which emerges more clearly from his major work, *Xuangang lun* 玄綱論 (Discourse on the Principal Features of the Profound Mystery of Dao).

² *Zongxuan ji*, ch. 13. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

The text opens with a cosmogonic account (sects. 1-4). For our purposes, stripping away much of the detail that would have been important to a study of the religious dimension of Wu Yun's thought, we need only note that for him, the Dao is "the root of all creative transformation." From a state of absolute "vacuity" or "nothingness" (*wu* 無), a process of autogenesis ensued, through which the "original" life-generating *qi* (*yuanqi* 元氣) spontaneously came into play (*zihua* 自化). A further differentiation saw the appearance of the yin and yang *qi*, which in turn gave rise to the "myriad beings" (*wanyou* 萬有).

Human beings, then, fall under three categories. The "discerning and wise" (*ruizhe* 睿哲)—a phrase often reserved for sages—are those who have been endowed with the finest yang-*qi* (*yangling* 陽靈); the "unintelligent and bad" (*wanxiong* 頑凶) are those informed by pure, "fiendish" yin-*qi* (*yinmei* 陰魅). The former consequently are kind (*huihe* 惠和) by nature, whereas the latter are perverse (*beili* 悖戾). Between these two stands the "average person" (*zhongren* 中人), who because of the mixture of yin and yang in their being may tend toward either good or evil. Unlike the gifted who will be able to learn about the truth of the Dao even without instruction and the crooked who will not change their foolish and foul ways despite having been taught, Wu's main concern is the middle group, which must be reckoned the vast majority and to whom the teachings of the sages are directed. Elsewhere in the *Xuangang lun* (sect. 30), Wu makes the same point: "The profound sages established their teachings precisely for the average people."

A Confucian background seems evident in this analysis. In the *Analects*, Confucius is reported to have said that "only the exceptionally intelligent and the most foolish will not change" (17.3).³ Moreover, the text distinguishes between "those who are born with knowledge," whom Confucius ranks as the highest, and "those who do not learn even when they find themselves in a bind," i. e., when they are confronted with pressing difficulties (16.9). Between these two groups are "those who acquire knowledge through learning" and "those who learn when they are confronted with difficulties." For Confucius, as later scholars would

³ Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 181. All quotations from the *Lunyu* refer to Yang's annotated edition.

be quick to recall, "one can speak to those who are above average about things of the highest order, but one cannot speak about such things to those who are below average" (6.21).

These reported sayings of Confucius could be interpreted in different ways, but there was little disagreement in medieval China that Confucius offered deep insight into the nature of human beings. Depending on how these passages are read, the famous saying that human beings are by nature close to one another and set apart through practice (*Analects* 17.2), as well as Confucius's disclaimer that he was not one "born with knowledge" would be interpreted accordingly (7.20). Indeed, it seems clear that for Wu Yun, Confucius and Laozi shared the same assessment of human nature and capacity. There should not be any doubt that a small minority simply cannot be made to follow in the footsteps of the sages.

In the language of religious Daoism, Wu declares that this group of people lack "the bones of an immortal" (*xian* 仙骨), which is to say that their *qi*-endowment is so weak and impure as to render them unfit for *xian*-hood. As Wu concludes, "Thus, [just as] ice cannot be engraved, the foolish cannot attain immortality—this is the principle of nature." This explains why they are not drawn to the way of immortality and would only laugh at the profound words of the sages. In contrast, those who set their heart on the Dao, one can safely infer, must then have the "bones" or innate potential to become an immortal. Nevertheless, as Wu further explains, though necessary, this inborn capacity is not sufficient and requires cultivation to bring it to fruition (XGL 32).

This effectively blurs the distinction between the gifted and the average, which calls for explanation. If one follows literally the classification in the *Analects*, Confucius distinguished not three but four categories of human beings (16.9). The highest are those "born with knowledge," which can easily be matched to those deemed to have been endowed with a special *qi*-constitution. In Ji Kang's view, immortals are born, not made, which means that their innate endowment is not only necessary but also sufficient for *xian*-hood. Ordinary human beings may be seen, then, to fall under three categories: above-average, average, and below-average. As I have argued elsewhere (Chan 2004; 2007; 2010), this seems to be the view of He Yan 何晏 (d. 249) as well, and is connected with the argument that human capacity (*cai* 才) and nature (*xing*) are "identical"

(*tong* 同), which formed a part of an important debate in early medieval China.

In treating sages and immortals as a species apart, one logical consequence is that they cannot serve as an ethical and political model.⁴ However, in recognizing the special nature of sages and immortals, one need not be left without practical guidance, for there are “near-sages,” those “above-average” individuals such as Yan Hui 顏回, who could be counted on to provide leadership. This entails that the above-average category must be kept small and special. Given the rarity of born sages, proponents of this view would also have to argue against the claim that “only sages can bring about great peace,” which attracted much debate during the Han-Wei transition.

Wu Yun did not share this view, because he believed that immortality can be attained, which presumably derives from his understanding of human nature and capacity. Of course, the theory of “three grades” (*sān-pín* 三品) of human nature has a long history, associated with such major intellectual figures of the Han period as Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179–104 B.C.E.), Wang Chong 王充 (ca. 27–97), and Xun Yue 荀悅 (148–209).⁵ What Wu did was to situate it in a larger theory of Dao as *qi*, which he no doubt considered the core of Daoist and Confucian teachings, judging from his reference to both the *Laozi* and the *Analects*. The fundamental assertion that the transformation of *qi* unlocks the mystery of Daoist creation makes more than a cosmological point, for it helps define the hermeneutical boundaries of philosophical reflection. It explains not only the origins of the “myriad beings,” but significantly also the shape and substance of individual human life and the differences among them. Every aspect of a person’s life, be it physical endowment, intelligence, personality traits, or moral capacity, is seen to be a manifestation of his or her *qi*-endowment. The concept of *xing*, on this view, captures the innate dispositions and capacities of a person, but crucially it is understood

⁴ The *Jinshu* 晉書, for example, relates that Sun Fang 孫放 (fl. 350) adopted the style name of Qizhuang 齊莊, i.e., “Equal of Zhuangzi.” When asked why he did not try to emulate Confucius, Sun explained that “Confucius was born with knowledge, which is not something that can be achieved by emulation”; see *Jinshu* 82 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 2149.

⁵ See for example, Zhu Ruikai 祝瑞開, *Liang Han sixiangshi* 兩漢思想史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 128, 321, and 383.

as being formed by *qi*. In other words, depending on one's *qi*-endowment, one comes to possess a nature that is characterized by dispositions and capacities of varying strength. This explains why some people are discerning and kind, reflecting significant intellectual and moral resource, while others are unintelligent and mean. This also explains why some may become sages and immortals while others cannot.

However, discounting the minority who do not qualify for higher *xian* pursuits, the difference between those born with an extraordinary *qi*-endowment and those of average capacity cannot be one of kind but only of degree, if the attainability of sagehood and immortality is to be maintained. This results in a blurring of the top two grades. Thus, while the *Xuangang lun* distinguishes high-grade persons of distinction from inferior men, likening them to "dragons" and "fish," respectively, it concludes that the latter could in principle become "dragons" (sect. 1). In this instance, the apparent logical inconsistency is resolved if one realizes that the interpretive focus is on the average majority.⁶ The question is, how, then, can an average person learn to become a sage or immortal?

The Problem of *Qing*

In the *Xuangang lun*, Wu treats sages and immortals as belonging to the same category: "Sages and immortals do not perish" (sect. 33). Confucius, Yao, Shun, and the Duke of Zhou are all said to enjoy *xian* status (sect. 29). Equally exalted titles such as *zhenren* 真人 (true one) and *zhiren* 至人 (ultimate one) follow the same logic, notwithstanding possible residual nuances stemming from earlier usages.⁷ For the average majority, sage-

⁶ Similarly, when Wu Yun speaks of the possibility of growing in wisdom for those who were ignorant when young, he was referring to the average majority (XGL 19). There are, of course, some differences between the two groups. For example, whereas those blessed with a *xian* nature—that is, with a purely yang *qi*-constitution that translates into excellent capacity on all fronts—may safely engage in political affairs, the average would do better leaving them behind (XGL 29).

⁷ *Zhuangzi* 33 distinguishes *tianren* 天人 (man of heaven), *shenren* 神人 (man of spirit), *zhiren*, and *shengren* 聖人. But Guo Xiang in the fourth century already took them to refer to the same kind of person. See Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* 新編諸子集成, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 4:1066.

hood characterized by immortality, authenticity and ultimate attainment is a realistic goal. What prevents them from achieving it, according to Wu Yun, is *qing*.

"That which gives me life is Dao, and that which extinguishes my life is *qing*," Wu writes (sect. 7). In this context, *qing* ostensibly refers to desire and emotions. In another essay, the *Xingshen kegu lun* 形神可固論 (Discourse on the Firmability of Body and Spirit), which defends the thesis that "the body and the spirit can be rendered perfectly firm," Wu argues succinctly that in principle human beings should enjoy everlasting life, because like Heaven and Earth, they, too, come to be through the transformation of the "one *qi*" that engendered the cosmos. The sub-prime reality that "human beings perish and do not live as long as Heaven and Earth" is due to "the workings of desire" (*Zongxuan ji*, 19). Indeed, if people allow objects of sight, sound, smell, and taste to quicken their affective appetite, they are bound to suffer bodily and spiritual harm. Conversely, if they could arrest desire, they would be well on their way to *xian*-hood (*Zongxuan ji*, 20–21).

At first glance, the argument seems straightforward and turns on the Daoist concept of "nothingness." Creation issues from a state of absolute vacuity, as we have seen, and although the concept of *wu* may be interpreted differently,⁸ the implication remains that the "original" or pristine state of the cosmos and by extension the human "microcosmos" should also be characterized by "nothingness." In ethical and spiritual terms, this translates into a state of profound tranquility or stillness (*jing* 靜). It is, however, disturbed by desire, which exhausts *qi* and causes spiritual and bodily collapse. The solution, then, would be to eradicate desire so as to return to the state of tranquility, a precondition for immortality and transcendence. In this sense, the being of the sage is quintessentially *wuqing* 無情, marked by the absence of desire and emotions.

⁸ For example, the concept of *wu* could be interpreted metaphysically as a transcendent essence; theologically as a divine power; logically as a necessary ontological foundation that does not admit any properties of being; or cosmologically as a state of undifferentiated oneness that may be described as "nothing," not in the sense of absence but a fecund presence without distinguishable features and thus of which nothing can be said.

Wu Yun could not ignore this argument—after all, few Daoists could doubt that “the Dao is absolute nothingness and (in a profoundly mysterious way) gives birth to Heaven and Earth” (XGL 6). Indeed, in outlining the “order” (*xu* 序) of Daoist learning, Wu emphasizes that the teachings of all the different schools are based on the principle of “utmost tranquility” (XGL 11).

Nevertheless, he also could not embrace it without qualification, in view of the basic premise that immortality can be learned and achieved by the average person. If the focus is on the exceptional few who are born with a special nature, and if it is assumed that immortality cannot be taught, the argument could afford to privilege nothingness or radical transcendence. True sages are utterly different, that would be all. But if the concern is with the average people, Wu would have to reconcile the emphasis on stillness in Daoist teachings with the pervasiveness of *qing* in human affairs. I will come back to the various interpretive options later; at this point, suffice it to say that this makes his approach to the question of *qing* in the nature of the sage considerably more demanding.

On the one hand, Wu cannot but affirm that human nature, even for the average person, is modeled after Dao and is in its root form not burdened by desire, a state which Wu describes as being of utmost solidity or stability (XGL 25). The imagery suggests the “coagulation” (*ning* 凝) of *qi* as it settles into material form, but the basic idea is that *xing* as such remains still and tranquil. Put differently, as Wu says, “the body [including the mind] is originally without affects” (XGL 7).

On the other hand, he must also acknowledge that *qing* forms an inalienable part of *xing*. Indeed, for the average people, as he asks with rhetorical flourish, “Who can be without desire and emotions” (XGL 30)? Ordinary humans are naturally drawn to sensory delights such as fragrant smell and soothing sounds (XGL 23). Who can deny that human beings inherently “like” (*hao* 好) longevity and good fortune and “dislike” (*wu* 惡) misfortune and a premature death (XGL 28)? How can these competing claims be reconciled?

Although in itself human nature is stable and quiet, it is set into motion when affected by things and affairs (XGL 25). This view, too, has a long history. For example, as the *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites) famously states, “When human beings are born, they are tranquil; this is the nature of [human beings endowed by] Heaven. When moved by things, they be-

come aroused; this is the affective movement of *xing*.”⁹ Regardless of its origin, the underlying philosophical point, as Wu makes clear, is that *qing* should be understood properly as the movement of *xing* (XGL 5). This brings into view a deeper meaning of *qing*, as affective capacity or “affectivity,” which makes possible response to external stimuli and finds expression in the differentiated emotions such as pleasure and anger. This enables Wu to negotiate a narrow path toward *xian*-hood between mystical abandonment of the body and being consumed by the desire of the flesh for the average man and woman.

The Workings of the Mind

Strictly speaking, such distinctions as stillness and movement do not apply to the concept of Dao, which by definition transcends all dualities (e.g., XGL 4). This should already signal that Wu would be wary of any one-sided approach to Daoist immortality. The difficulty is that the phenomenal world is constituted by yin and yang *qi*, which entails opposites. At one level, Wu has to give due weight to the well-established doctrine that yang and yin represent the forces of life and death, respectively. It is the yang essence that forms the human spirit (*shen* 神), while that of yin produces the “corpse” (*shi* 尸)—that is, the pathogenic agent responsible for decay and death. Within each person, a literally life-and-death struggle takes place, for the triumph of yang would lead to not only great peace but also deathlessness; conversely, if yin prevails, the yang forces would be spent, resulting in death (XGL 12).¹⁰

This complicates the argument but does not alter its main trajectory. At a higher conceptual level, the movement of *qi* remains vital to cosmic and human flourishing. Although it is true that the arousal of affectivity will inevitably upset the stability of *xing* (XGL 30), it cannot be argued that the Daoist remedy lies in cutting off the capacity of *qing*.¹¹ It is also

⁹ Liji, “Yueji” 樂記, in *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義 by Kong Yingda 孔穎達, *Shisan-jing zhushu buzheng* 十三經注疏補正 ed. (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1963), 37.3a.

¹⁰ Cf. XGL 14 and 21. Indeed, according to Wu Yun, even if there is just a single breath of yin, immortality remains a distant goal.

¹¹ As is to be expected, this point is made repeatedly in the XGL. See, for example, sections 7, 23 and 27.

correct to say that desire and emotions are contrary to Dao and that "therefore the gentleman dismisses [the stirrings of] desire" (XGL 5), but it does not follow that the goal of transcendence can be achieved by somehow negating affectivity, which would amount to extinguishing the flow of *qi* and is thus suicidal. What is envisioned, rather, is an ideal state in which "the mind is quiet and *qi* moves about [smoothly and calmly]" (XGL 6), or phrased differently, "the body is active but the mind is quiet" (XGL 15). This is also what Wu describes as the ideal mode of being in which "*qing* is forgotten" (*wangqing* 忘情).

Despite ceaseless transformation, the Dao never becomes exhausted (XGL 2). The basic conceptual model should be sufficiently clear at this point. The inexhaustibility of Dao reflects not only its power but also purity; that is to say, its operations are clear of pathological movements, which in the human world would be typified by the rushes of desire. Although so far the discussion has focused on the concept of *xing*, in operational terms it is the mind or heart (*xin* 心) that actually feels and thinks and directs the movement of inborn nature. This is a key link in Wu's argument. Although Wu often stresses the role of the spirit (*shen*), which is of religious significance, what needs to be explained remains how the mind can stay quiet, strengthen its *yang-qi*, and be immune to the lure of desire. Thus, while it is important to emphasize that the spirit will be stable and calm if one stays true to one's nature, and that the spirit will be disturbed if one indulges one's *qing* (XGL 27), Wu would still have to take the argument back to the workings of the mind.

In principle, the mind is governed by one's inborn nature and as such should also tend toward stillness and tranquility. More precisely, the stillness of inborn nature reflects a state of equilibrium in one's internal *qi* environment, which predisposes the mind to rest in peaceful quietude. However, the mind itself is constituted by *qi* both substantively and functionally, which means that it naturally responds to phenomena when it comes into contact with them through the senses. This is the capacity of *qing*, which is responsible for all affective functions, from sensations such as cold and hunger to higher-order emotional states such as pleasure and anger that involve a cognitive dimension. This is what I take Wu Yun to mean when he writes, "The spirit [of a person] receives [its essence] from the Dao; it is [inherently] quiet and coincides with *xing*."

The human body receives [its essence] from the spirit; it is [inherently] in motion and coincides with *qing*" (XGL 27).

It is possible to drill down further, based on earlier explorations of *qing* in Chinese tradition. First, there is the understanding that the concept of desire (*yu* 欲) depicts primarily the movement of the affectivity of the mind in response to phenomena. The *Xunzi*, as is well known, defines *yu* as "the response of *qing*" (*qing zhi ying* 情之應), which may be read in the light of the explanation in the *Liji* that desire refers to one's nature being moved by things.¹² As such, *yu* signifies the process of desiring and is not an instantiation of *qing*-generated emotions like anger; rather, anger and other emotions arise as one's *qing*-capacity becomes *yu*-activated through contact with phenomena (see Yearly 1996). As the capacity of *qing* is inherent in one's inborn nature and the workings of the mind, it also conveys the sense of what is genuinely so of a thing and by extension state of affairs. This is not an etymological argument, but a conceptual connection that should be apparent to Tang scholars. In any event, the philosophically important distinction, it seems to me, is that between *qing* as affectivity and *qing* as the emotions.

Furthermore, the *qi*-driven *yu*-movement of the *qing*-capacity of the mind leads to one's "liking" (*hao*) and "disliking" (*wu*) certain things. This may be regarded as the most basic expression of human affectivity and forms the basis of the differentiated emotions. For example, the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Mr. Zuo's Record) explains that "pleasure is born of liking and anger is born of disliking (something)," and observes: "The things one likes [referring especially to life] bring joy, and the things one dislikes [especially death] bring sorrow."¹³ The reasoning appears to be

¹² *Xunzi zhuzi suoyin* 荀子逐字索引, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Institute of Chinese Studies, Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series. (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1996), p. 111; *Liji*, "Yueji," *Liji zhengyi*, 37.3a. On the definition of *yu* in the *Liji*, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) comments to the effect that if *xing* does not come into contact with things, there would not be any desire (言性不見物則無欲). This is one solution to the problem of *qing*, which Wu Yun and Li Ao, as we will see, both reject.

¹³ *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao 25, in *Chunqiu jingzhuan jijie* 春秋經傳集解, *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 edition (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 25.11a. The *Yucong er* 語叢二, one of the bamboo text fragments found at Guodian, also states: "dislikes are born of *xing*; anger is born of disliking (something);" see *Guodian Chumu zhu-*

that to be pleased, for example, one has to like certain things and have the inbuilt capacity and mechanism to be driven toward them. When that "liking" is met, one experiences pleasure as the mind rouses with satisfaction; if not, the *qi*-energies stir in the opposite direction and one becomes upset, displeased and angry. Presumably for this reason, pleasure and anger are always paired in early Chinese literature.

Obviously, if the mind is constituted by *qi*, it would follow that all emotions are likewise understood as configurations of *qi*. The Guodian text *Xingzi mingchu* 性自命出 (Inner Nature Emerges from Destiny), for example, defines *xing* explicitly as "the *qi* of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and grief."¹⁴ In the *Zhuangzi*, to take but one other example, anger is said to be generated by concentrated *qi* "rising up without coming down."¹⁵ The *Zhuangzi* traces the arousal of affectivity further to what one deems "right or wrong" (*shifei* 是非); that is, self-referential judgments that direct the liking and disliking *yu*-movements of the mind. Although Wu did not spell out the precise workings of the affectivity of the mind, he would have to agree that *dongxin* 動心, constant *yu*-movement of the mind, is a basic human condition, given that *qi* is always in motion, at least for the average person. This would suggest that, like Mencius, Wu would be interested in articulating an ethical and spiritual ideal characterized by *budong xin* 不動心, a mind that stays unmoved.

Affective Oblivion

How does one preserve the stillness and tranquility of the mind? The issue extends beyond the observance of obvious moral precepts such as not taking life. As Wu observes, the mind must not allow even "small pleasure and anger," and seemingly innocuous assertions of "right and

jian 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), 204. I have touched on this in Chan 2002. See also Chen 2008.

¹⁴ *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 179. *Bei* 悲 signifies not only grief but also pity and indignation. On the concept of *qing* in the text, see Puett 2004.

¹⁵ *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19, in *Zhuangzi jishi*, 3.650. At this level, the meaning of *nu* 怒 need not be restricted to anger. The great *peng* bird in *Zhuangzi* 1, for example, "heaves" (*nu*) and takes flight, not with anger but by concentrating and directing its *qi* (*Zhuangzi jishi*, 1.2).

wrong, and what is acceptable [to oneself] and what is not." As he says: "These are the constant affective manifestations of human beings, and they are extremely difficult to guard against."

Still, Daoist cultivation consists precisely in making sure that none of these will dictate the life of the mind. Although even the wise cannot but "like to be praised and loath to be criticized," it is up to the individual to decide if these and other likes and dislikes would be allowed to control his or her life. If one realizes this and "in total effortless ease forgets one's desire and emotions, such that what appears pleasing or offensive does not move one's center, then he is surely a man of ultimate attainments!" (XGL 18).

How does one attain this state of "forgetfulness" and what does it mean? Forceful suppression of desire, by means of extreme asceticism for example, may be ruled out. No doubt, "the [person of] Dao does not desire to have [wanton movements of] the mind," for such movements would disperse the vital *qi*-energies that nourish the body and spirit.¹⁶ At the same time, however, "the [person of] Dao also does not desire to labor to forget [the affective activities of] the mind," for that would invite other unwelcome "guests," i.e., other physical and mental impositions that would equally disturb the tranquil peace of the mind (XGL 13). The *Xuangang lun* also dismisses ritual and worship as ineffective and counter-productive in this context (sect. 20). The way to Daoist immortality lies in "training in quietude" (*xijing* 習靜) (XGL 25), which encompasses both ethical and spiritual practices. Wu is of course well remembered for his contribution to establishing "inner alchemy" as the main current in medieval Daoism; but I will leave that aside, for my concern is primarily to make clear the logic of Wu's argument. Again, what does "forgetting *qing*" mean?

In a general sense, it may be said that the mind of the person of Dao will always be calm (*xin chang ning* 心常寧) and that his *qi* circulation will be smooth without artificial intervention (*qi zi yun* 氣自運). Theoretically, one can stipulate, as Wu does, that the ideal ethical and spiritual state "transcends movement and stillness" (*zhao dongjing* 超動靜) (XGL 6). It

¹⁶ The logical status of "desiring not to desire," which entered Daoist discourse before Wu Yun, is not a factor here, given the dual assumption that the mind is inherently quiet and constantly moving. The issue concerns rather the way in which tranquility, which entails affective oblivion, may be achieved.

may also be argued that the Daoist master understands that "being" and "nothingness" entail each other (XGL 7).¹⁷ But these are general assertions that do not quite explain the practical meaning of *wangqing*. Similarly, appeals to Zhuangzi's "sitting in forgetfulness" (*zuowang* 坐忘) or "fasting of the mind" (*xinzhai* 心齋) cannot disguise as explanation, although they are helpful in reminding the reader that the problem of *qing* has been a part of the Chinese intellectual landscape long before the arrival of Buddhism.

The meaning of *wangqing* is unfortunately not fully addressed in Wu's writings. Nevertheless, it seems clear that it refers not to an act, but to a state of mind characterized by what may be called affective oblivion. Moreover, there is some evidence that such oblivion presupposes intellectual discernment. In the XGL (sect. 15), Wu offers an unusual analysis of "effortless action" (*wuwei* 無爲; see Slingerland 2003). First, he points out that *wuwei* concerns the mind and not the level of activity. If a person's mind is not quiet, he will not be in a state of *wuwei* even if he retires from the world. This is not unusual, but Wu goes on to say that *wuwei* can only be realized by those who possess profound understanding (*zhiming* 至明). This is important because there are situations in which *wuwei* actually could lead to undesirable outcomes. The analogy that Wu uses is that although both "day" and "night" function by *wuwei*, they yield light and darkness, respectively. The real concern, however, is that unscrupulous individuals would dominate government if an unenlightened ruler practices *wuwei*, although under an enlightened ruler, *wuwei* would certainly bring worthy candidates into public service. "Thus, those with far-reaching understanding realize *wuwei* with discernment," as Wu concludes; in contrast, for the unenlightened, *wuwei* reflects but a mind filled with dark clouds of unknowing. Only the kind of *wuwei* that results from careful study and reflection can be truly regarded as *wuwei*.

There might be specific political reasons for this, but the priority of understanding seems unmistakable. At one point, Wu defines "utmost tranquility" as being impervious to temptation (XGL 6). When one reaches the highest level of quietude, one accords with "vacuity" (*xu* 虛), which entails perfect understanding (*ming* 明), luminous clarity (*ying* 瑩),

¹⁷ Also in the *Shenxian kexue lun*, with Laozi 11 in the background.

and thorough and penetrating insight (*che* 徹). The last three terms all reflect a cognitive bias, privileging the intellectual function of the mind.¹⁸

What kind of understanding is being envisaged here? The notion of optimal quietude seeks to disclose a fundamental qualitative difference in the mind of the sage. As mentioned, theoretically it has to be defined as transcending both movement and stillness, but in practical terms it essentially points to a quiet but active mind, as opposed to the absence or cessation of activity. This is a state in which one “does not know” (*buzhi* 不知) that one is being active or quiet, as Wu attempts to explain (XGL 6).

A “Mystical” Reading?

This form of “unknowing” evidently cannot be the same as that which issues from a “darkened” or confused (*hun* 昏) mind. One may also safely discount loss of memory, whether occasional or permanent.¹⁹ Some Daoists may see the ideal sage figure as being akin to what the mundane world would consider an “idiot,” embodying childlike simplicity and guilelessness, perhaps even like the figure of Hundun 渾沌 (“chaos”) in the *Zhuangzi*, who is devoid of worldly and otherworldly interests.²⁰ But this does not appear to be what Wu has in mind, given his emphasis on reflection and understanding.

Wangqing also cannot be the result of self-imposed isolation or suppression of sensory experience. This point is worth repeating because it bears directly on his understanding of spiritual practice. Although he does recognize the value of retiring to a “quiet chamber” or “oratory” (*jingshi* 靜室) (XGL 16) and staying clear of political involvement for the average learners (e.g., XGL 29), and despite his interest in “inner cultivation” (see Roth 1999), he does not appear to be recommending any form of mysticism. What seems to be envisaged is a state of mindfulness that

¹⁸ In XGL 7, the perfect state of inborn nature is also described as *che*, embodying profound insight that is both deep and far-reaching.

¹⁹ However, see *Jinshu* 晉書 94.2441, where the recluse Guo Wen 郭文 argues that emotions arise from memory, and in his case he does not exercise his memory and is therefore not troubled by them.

²⁰ The story of Hundun appears in *Zhuangzi* 7. For an extensive study, see Girardot 1983.

remains unaffected by the movement of affectivity and desire. The important qualification is that this requires careful training for the average person, so that in the end rights and wrongs and likes and dislikes do not enter into the mind. Drawing inspiration from the *Zhuangzi*, Wu intimates that when one understands that life and death are but moments of natural transformation and therefore does not rejoice in the former or worry about the latter, one reaches the state in which "both anxiety and joy are forgotten; then one's *qing* will have been extinguished while nature remains intact" (XGL 30).

Perhaps this still does not quite explain what *wangqing* means, but it does narrow the field of interpretation. Consider the following examples. Suppose a Daoist sage sees a terribly disfigured person, like one of those uncommon individuals who frequent the pages of the *Zhuangzi*, he would recognize the difference, but he would not be repulsed, moved to pity or react in any way, because he recognizes that such difference does not make any difference in value terms. It is, then, as if one does not see any difference; that is, there is no consequent *qi*-movement in the mind that would generate an emotional response.

Suppose suddenly the sage sees a small boy about to fall into a well, how would he or she react? I think Wu would admit that the sage's moving but unmoved mind would register the situation and a sense of alarm not motivated by self-interest would ensue spontaneously, as opposed to saying that the sage would experience nothing at all. However, this does not amount to feeling elated if the child is not hurt, or sad if he dies, which would fail the Daoist requirement of not being burdened (*wulei* 無累) by desire. Suppose further the sage's wife or parents died, how would he respond? In this instance, we have ample examples from the *Zhuangzi*. When Zhuangzi's wife died, he was sad at first, given the inevitable movement of *qing*, but having reflected on the nature of things he stopped grieving and sang as though he was pleased and was celebrating her passing (*Zhuangzi* 18, 3.614–15). When Mengsun Cai's 孟孫才 mother died, as the *Zhuangzi* also relates, he cried without shedding tears, did not appear to suffer any deep emotional distress in his heart, and showed little sorrow in mourning. Yan Hui was puzzled, especially given that Mengsun Cai was known for his expertise in the rites of mourning, and raised his concern with Confucius. "The people cried and he also cried," Confucius explained, for Mengsun Cai understood the

meaning of life and death and was therefore able to divest himself of any emotional attachment to them (*Zhuangzi* 6, 1.274–75). Whether the sage sang or went along with the established rituals of mourning is secondary, the important point is that his mind remains quiet and that there is a qualitative difference in his behavior. Whether this would satisfy the “true” Daoist or “orthodox” Confucian is irrelevant; what is of concern is the kind of philosophical position that Wu had to take, given certain basic premises.

Notes on Li Ao

The problem of *qing* has been a mainstay of Chinese philosophy since at least the Warring States period. It is not a preserve of Daoism, although the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* do have important things to say about it. The problem of *qing* in no small measure helps shape the contours of the development of Chinese philosophy. Simply put, the concept of *qing* may be understood differently, but it cannot be ignored.

The way in which *qing* may be interpreted depends on the context of inquiry, which in the main includes questions about *xing* and the attainability of sagehood. It is moot whether it is because of one’s view of sagehood that one understands *xing* and *qing* in a certain way, or the other way round. All three are integrally related in the Chinese hermeneutic enterprise. Beginning with the *Zhuangzi*, there was increasing recognition that the solution to the problem of desire lies not in its negation but in a qualitatively different mode of being in which *qing* plays a positive role. *Wuqing* in the literal sense of absence of *qing*, in other words, was seldom the preferred option.

In the minds of many of the educated elite, especially Confucians, for whom meaning and value reside in a relational universe, the presence of *qing* is required to explain filial affection and humaneness, and to ensure timely and sagely response to the affairs of the world. Though *qing* is a potential liability, an affective harmony may be brought about by the rites and music, according to this view, which enables judicious management of complexities. This is a powerful vision, which permeates Chinese philosophic discourse. To those who are concerned that “the teaching of names” stifles spontaneity and corrupts authenticity, an alternative would be needed. The concept of *wangqing* appears in this context; or, in the words of Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312), ethical and spiritual

pursuits aim at embodying "the *qing* that does not have [the liabilities of] *qing*" (*Zhuangzi jishi* 1.247, n.1). Commenting on *Zhuangzi* 5, Guo Xiang explains: "Those who do not harbor judgments of right and wrong, and likes and dislikes ... they are certainly human in every way, but [in a person like this] where can the emotions attach themselves to?" (1.222, n.1). This ideal persisted through the Tang to the Ming dynasty, as scholars such as Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085) and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) all returned to it.²¹

In Wu's case, the theory of *qi* and the attainability of sagehood together shape his interpretive horizon. If one believes that it is possible to become a sage, and if this comes with a prior understanding of the Daoist universe as being constituted by one originally unified *qi*, it is unlikely that one would be pursuing a line of reasoning that ends in a mystical view of the sage. Once this intellectual commitment is made, certain entailments follow, which would give priority to continuity over rupture in the interpretation of sagehood and immortality. If one believes that a fish can become a dragon, and given the assumption that both are made of the same stuff, the latter can hardly be conceived as being radically different or having something that is not already present in the former—in this case, the seed of immortality as part of one's inborn nature. Once this move is made, the presence of *qing* must be recognized, which precludes negation or surgical removal in addressing the problem of desire and emotions.

Rather than seeing Wu as being "influenced" by Confucianism, as is often alleged, my suggestion is that we should try to reconstruct the flow of his argument. There is a philosophical reason why Wu has to labor to maintain a position that is nearly impossible to explain. With hindsight, especially given the contribution of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), it may not appear that Wu was particularly successful, but during the Tang this was an important pioneering effort. From a different perspective, the Tang Confucian scholar Li Ao also addresses the problem of *qing*, especially in

²¹ Cheng Hao writes in his *Dingxing shu* 定性書 (Letter on Stilling One's Nature): "It is the constancy of the sage that he uses his *qing* to enable the flourishing of phenomena but without [being affected by] *qing*." See Song Yuan *xue'an* 宋元學案, *juan* 13 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1966), 319. Wang Yangming discusses Cheng Hao's thesis in *Chuanxi lu* 傳習錄 167.

his *Fuxing shu* 復性書 (Essay on Returning to Original Nature), which may offer a useful comparative note on the subject.

Li Ao is often said to be indebted to Buddhism and Daoism, which for our purposes merely confirms that basic philosophical inquiries cannot be measured by partisan concerns. Like Wu, Li Ao works from the basic premise that all beings are constituted by “one *qi*” (1.3b: 一氣之所養; cf. 3.10b).²² Although the *Fuxing shu* does not offer any cosmological explanation, Li affirms that all things are constituted by “essential *qi*” (2.10a), citing the “Appended Remarks” to the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes; *Xici* A).

What this means is that Li Ao must also address the identity and difference of human beings. Some differences must be recognized, such as life expectancy. Yan Hui is a classic example in this regard, who would have been able to attain sagehood had he not died at a young age. Thus, Li Ao cannot but concede that in a world constituted by *qi*, the endowment that each receives “is not necessarily equal” (1.3b). However, unlike Wu, Li considers all human beings to have been endowed with the same moral nature, which accounts for the fact that human beings are fundamentally different from and superior to other living creatures, even though all beings are formed by *qi* (3.10b). This “distilled” view of *xing* commits Li Ao to the argument that the nature of the sage cannot be different from that of the common people (1.1b). Put positively, as Li erases any remaining doubt, “the nature of Yao or Shun is the same as that of [the worst tyrant like] Jie or Zhou” (2.8a).²³

²² All quotations from Li Ao are from the *Fuxing shu*, electronic *Siku quanshu*, Wenyuange edition. The text is divided into 3 sections and will be cited by their section and page number. For a study and translation, see Barrett 1992.

²³ This does not necessarily contradict the reported sayings of Confucius discussed earlier, for they could be read as confirming the decisive role of learning and practice or the degree of understanding in each individual, which accounts for the different bands in which human beings may be generally grouped under. On this view, it is inconceivable that anyone can be “born with knowledge”; what Confucius meant in this instance was that some were able to maximize their capacity to learn, which is common to all. When he said that he was not “born with knowledge,” he was but making a rhetorical point to emphasize the centrality of learning and reflection.

While Li Ao and Wu disagree on the equality of *xing*, they are both committed to defending the attainability of sagehood, which leads them to a structurally similar hermeneutical course, regardless of their "school" affiliation. The *Fuxing shu* begins by saying that "what enables a person to become a sage is his inborn nature" (1.1a). This is understood to have been endowed by Heaven (1.1b; also 2.6b) and to have a deep moral core, as the text later discloses. Finding particular inspiration from the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Abiding by the Center in Everyday Practice), Li Ao further defines sagehood in terms of "utmost sincerity" (*zhicheng* 至誠), which results from complete realization of one's moral nature (1.2b). If inborn sageness is thus assured, the reason why few people attain sagehood would demand full interpretive attention. As Li Ao explains, sagehood remains a distant goal for the majority because their nature has become clouded, and what clouds their nature is *qing* (1.1a).

Like Wu, then, Li Ao must also negotiate the meaning of *qing* and *wuqing*. The point that needs to be made clear, as Li Ao struggles to explain, is that "although (the sage) has *qing*, he actually never has *qing*" (1.1b). This is a difficult position to defend; but the general line of reasoning and what compels it should be relatively clear, in the light of our discussion of Wu.

If one begins with the supposition that everyone can become a sage, the immediate question that needs to be addressed is how a thoroughly rotten person like Jie or Zhou could possibly become a sage. This would focus attention on the universality and identity of *xing*. If one starts from the premise that inborn nature is universally the same, the issue is whether this would entail that everyone can become a sage. This would focus attention on the basis of sagehood. Li Ao assumes both, which limit if not dictate his interpretive options.

If nature is not universally the same and sagehood is not open to all, one could conceivably ground the possibility of sagehood in, say, exceptional *qi*-endowment. If nature is not universally the same but sagehood is in principle attainable by all, the basis of sagehood could be traced to learning and practice. If nature is universally the same but only some people can become sages, one could argue that nature is inherently problematic but some could surpass their inborn limitations by learning. If nature is universally the same and all can become sages, the likely argument is that it is nature that makes sagehood possible. This last is the

course that Li Ao chooses to pursue, tracing the possibility of sagehood more specifically to one's moral nature.

However, this also means that Li must identify the problem that prevents the full realization of moral nature. There is no need to go through all the logical possibilities, for the accepted theory is that *qing* is the culprit. One could argue that *qing* is alien to *xing*, but that would challenge the assumption that "one *qi*" gives rise to all and/or the purpose of Heaven. Thus, like Wu, Li Ao affirms that "*qing* is born of *xing*" (1.1b). If *xing* forms the basis of sagehood, and if *qing* comes with the original package, so to speak, it would not do to simply assert that sagehood hinges on the eradication of *qing*. This explains the need to mediate between *qing* and *wuqing*.

The rest of the argument may be summarized briefly. According to Li Ao, *qing* should be properly understood as the movement of *xing* (1.1b). Since *qing* has already been identified as the obstacle to sagehood, it would follow that *xing* must be originally predisposed toward stillness and tranquility (2.6b), as the "Yueji" chapter of the *Liji* has noted. This can be conflated with the Mencian thesis that human nature is originally good, as Li Ao makes the connection, which further secures the claim that it is moral nature that informs sagehood (2.8b). Nevertheless, the main requirement of the argument remains how *qing* and *wuqing*, the movement and stillness of *xing*, can be reconciled in the being of the sage.

The reason why people "do not see their nature" is that their mind has been "darkened" or confused (*hun*) by their "desire and likes and dislikes" (2.8a; cf. 1.1b–2a). This is the same language that Wu uses and reflects a similar understanding of the workings of the mind.²⁴ Desire and emotions such as pleasure and anger are "all the work of *qing*" (1.1a), as Li Ao clarifies, which suggests that *qing* is also understood as affective capacity, as distinguished from the emotions themselves.

²⁴ When asked why his understanding of the *Zhongyong* differs from that of other commentators, Li Ao remarks that whereas they explain the text from the perspective of things and affairs, he "penetrates it with the mind" (2.7b). This probably should not be read in the sense that he penetrated the meaning of the *Zhongyong* "with" his mind, but rather from the perspective of the workings of the mind; see Barrett 1992, 120.

Because *qing* is part of *xing* and the latter forms the basis of sagehood, the way to realizing one's moral nature certainly cannot lie in eliminating *qing*; but more significantly, because *qing* is understood as the movement of the affective capacity of the mind, like Wu Yun, Li Ao also has to take the extra step in distinguishing quietude, which is only the preliminary "fasting of the mind," from the ultimate attainment transcending both stillness and movement (2.5a–5b). This does complicate the argument, for the assertion that *xing* originally tends toward stillness must now be qualified, but it is necessary in view of the understanding of *qing* as capacity.

In other words, if *qing* is not understood as capacity, the apparent contradiction between having and not having *qing* cannot be resolved. Once *qing* is so understood, however, the movement of the mind as such cannot be denied. The affective capacity of the mind translates precisely into both movement and quietude (2.5a), which means that conceptually the desired outcome cannot be one or the other, but a state of mind that transcends both. Again, the argument cannot be that affectivity must be extinguished or that the mind is rendered incapable of responding to phenomena, which would make one "not human" (2.6a), as Li Ao observes; rather, what one needs to understand is how the mind can remain unaffected by what it clearly perceives.

The mind of the sage may be described as being of "utmost sincerity" or following Mencius, "unmoved" in its moral focus (*budong xin*), to which the *Fuxing shu* refers (1.4a), or in Li's own preferred formula, having "returned" to and thus in perfect accord with one's original nature (*fuxing* 復性); but the key to this argument remains that "although [the sage] has [the capacity of] *qing*, he actually never has [the experience of being burdened by] *qing* [in the sense of affects]." In practical terms, Li cites the example of Yao and Shun, whose appointment of worthy ministers does not reflect what is "pleasing" to them, nor does the punishment they meted out to those who committed offenses reflect "anger." Rather, their action stems from a state of mind that accorded with the "right measure" (2.8b). Leaving aside the antecedents of this concept, in this instance it points to an internal measure that stems from a clear mind.

In this respect, like Wu, Li Ao also privileges the intellectual ability of the mind. The sage is defined as one who is the first to be "awakened" (1.2a) to the nature and capacity of his inborn nature. Similarly, the con-

cept of understanding (*ming* 明) features centrally in the *Fuxing shu* (e.g., 1.2a–2b, 2.9a–9b). Whether this reflects Buddhist and Daoist influence is unimportant; what matters philosophically is that this is the only reasonable option open to Li. If both movement and stillness must be recognized, and if ritual and music can only lead one in the direction of quietude and harmony, some profound understanding will have to be presupposed to achieve the ideal of being able to respond to phenomena yet without being affected by them.

One last point that should be mentioned is that Li Ao, in a language that easily invites misunderstanding, repeatedly speaks of *qing*-affects as representing “deviation” (*xie* 邪) from or “wild movements” (*wang* 妄) of *xing* (e.g., 2.5b, 2.9a). When combined with statements to the effect that *xing* will once more become “clear and bright” when the wild movements of *qing* have been extinguished (2.9a), it is understandable that some later scholars, such as Zhu Xi, might come to the conclusion that Li Ao was talking about *wuqing* in a nihilistic sense.²⁵ However, viewed in its proper context, the idea that desire and emotions deviate from the stillness of *xing* serves to reinforce the basic claim that affectivity should not be understood as an “evil” force that is diametrically opposed to *xing*, as well as the power of reflection in getting to the root of the problem of *qing*. After all, as Li Ao states, consequences of affectivity may be good or bad (2.8a). However, consequences are contingent; what is necessary for perfect sagehood is a mind that remains firmly unmoved by phenomena and is in this sense absolutely quiet (1.2b, 1.4a, and 2.5b). Once it is understood that evil represents deprivation of good, and not a positive entity as such, the mind will ideally not engage in thoughts and feelings that are motivated by self-interest, and in this state desire and emotions will have no cause to arise (2.5a).

Although Li Ao does not make use of the concept of affective oblivion (*wangqing*), given the same basic premises he shared with Wu, he would have to engage a similar argument. Ideas about *qing* and *wuqing* already captured the Chinese philosophic imagination during the Six Dynasties.²⁶ The debate between He Yan and Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) on

²⁵ Zhuzi Yulei 朱子語類 59 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 4:1381.

²⁶ The *Suishu* 隋書 mentions that during the Liang dynasty (502–556), there was a “Treatise on the Sage’s Not Having Emotions” (*Sheng ren wuqing lun* 聖人

the *qing* of the sage had left a lasting impression on later scholars. Neither of them saw *wuqing* as the absence of affectivity. Whereas He Yan considered the sage to embody a special *qi*-endowment that finds expression in perfect harmony in every respect and therefore does not exhibit any differentiated emotion such as pleasure and anger, Wang Bi countered with a view that is logically close to Wu's and especially that of Li Ao, for he realized that any argument based on *qi* gradation would impact the attainability of sagehood.

From the Wei-Jin period, *wangqing* assumed a central place in conceptions of the sage, as Guo Xiang's *Zhuangzi* commentary and the *Shishuo xinyu* readily testify.²⁷ In the end, Wu and Li Ao may still object to each other's conception of the sage. For one thing, they would clearly interpret "immortality" in vastly different ways. The emphasis on perfecting both the body and the spirit in Wu is evidently not on Li Ao's agenda, which focuses sharply on moral nature, although the blurring of the distinction between sage nature and the nature of the average person in Wu bridges the philosophical distance from his younger contemporary. There are also important differences between affective oblivion and utmost sincerity; e.g., concerning the role of ritual and music. Nevertheless, viewed side by side, they share a number of key philosophical insights and are thus committed to defending a similar argument, which makes a reconstruction of their hermeneutical presuppositions of interest to students of Chinese philosophy and religion.

無情論). Unfortunately, the work had been lost, and we have no record of its author or content. See *Suishu* 34 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 1002.

²⁷ For example, see Yang Yong 楊勇, *Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 世說新語校箋 (Taipei: Zhengwen, 1992), 2.51, 4.57, and 17.4.

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Wu Zhao and the Queen Mother of the West

NORMAN HARRY ROTHSCHILD

Abstract

This essay examines the curious and significant role played by the Queen Mother of the West, the most powerful female deity in the Daoist pantheon, in political rhetoric crafted by Wu Zhao and her capable team of rhetoricians. As Gaozong's empress, Wu Zhao offered a sacrifice at a shrine to the Queen Mother of the West on Mount Song. This unique female sovereign developed a repertoire of symbols and ceremonies that were associated with the Daoist goddess. Wu Zhao also cast her image in the same mold of timeless beauty as Xiwangmu. Finally, in her later years, surrounded by perfumed youths, Wu Zhao theatrically transformed her inner court into a Daoist fairyland, styling herself a latter-day Queen Mother of the West.

At first glance, it is tempting to consider Wu Zhao 武曌 China's only female emperor, a Buddhist monarch. After all, shortly after establishing her Zhou dynasty in 690, Wu Zhao, a Buddhist nun and believer in her youth, formally elevated Buddhism over Daoism.¹ She held relic veneration ceremonies that whipped the masses into a frenzy of devotion. She commissioned the construction of a great volume of Buddhist statuary. She established many Buddhist temples. Grand monuments of Buddhist pacifism like the Axis of the Sky and the firmament-piercing five-story pagoda containing an 880 foot Buddha in her Bright Hall complex. A veritable army of Buddhist monks from India, Central Asia, and Chinese monks collaborated on massive translation projects and develop propa-

¹ Sima Guang 司馬光, *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1995; hereafter ZZTJ), 204.6473; Dong Hao 董浩 et al., *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996; hereafter QTW), 95.981

ganda that exalted Wu Zhao as a Cakravartin and a living bodhisattva (Rothschild 2008, 137-56). She took imperial titles echoing grandiose Buddhist resonance, like “Peerless Maitreya” (Wushang cishi 無上慈氏)² and “Golden Wheel” (Jinlun 金輪; XTS 4.94). She set up Buddhist vegetarian prohibitions and held huge communal Buddhist feasts (such as that in 694), inviting noble and humble, men and women, young and old (ZZTJ 205.6522).

Religion and Legitimation

A great deal of recent scholarship has emphasized the vital and central role that Buddhism played in legitimizing the political authority of Wu Zhao. Chen Yinke argued that Wu Zhao necessarily relied on Buddhism for political sanction, as the Confucian tradition provided her no blueprint for political validation or legitimation (1971). Stanley Weinstein contended that given the inbuilt patriarchal impulse in Confucianism and the Li family's claimed descent from Daoist founder Laozi, Wu Zhao naturally looked to Buddhism to sanction her political authority because it “had no vested interest in the maintenance of the T'ang” (1987, 41).

Richard Guisso, in the *Cambridge History of China*, remarks that Buddhism, which “permeated the lives of the ordinary people of the T'ang,” was a key persuasive element in validating her sovereignty in the eyes of “the vast majority of the people” (1979, 305). Chen Jinhua has cataloged the ongoing efforts of Wu Zhao to “capitalize on the ideological value” of campaigns of Buddhist relic veneration beginning as early as 659, shortly after she became Gaozong's Empress (2002, 109-48).

Antonino Forte, in his *Political Propaganda and Ideology in Late Seventh Century China*, has illustrated how the Commentary on the Great Cloud Sutra, propagated on the eve of the inauguration of her Zhou dynasty, forwarded proofs that Wu Zhao was both a Cakravartin, a Buddhist universal wheel-turning monarch reincarnated from one of Buddha's female disciples, and the reincarnation of the Bodhisattva Maitreya (2006). Forte has also shown that Wu Zhao transformed the traditional notion of a simple Confucian Bright Hall into a huge complex featuring a sky-piercing Tower of Maitreya, and that her Axis of the Sky, con-

² Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1997; hereafter XTS), 4.95.

structed in 694, was a monument of international Buddhist pacifism (Forte 1988). Similarly, Sen Tansen contends that between 685 and 695, Wu Zetian secured critical support from Buddhist clergy to legitimize her authority and her formal role as "emperor" of China (2003, 95).

While Buddhism certainly played a pivotal role in Wu Zhao's sovereignty, her gender and the resultant precarious nature of her power forced her to deploy language, symbol and ideology in a unique and creative manner. To this end, she sought to maximize her political repertoire, to marshal as many different symbols and modes of validation as possible. In the pluralistic, diverse and cosmopolitan empire of her day, Wu Zhao assumed a multiplicity of ideological guises: her support and patronage of different ideologies waned and waxed with changing political circumstances. Or, as Stephen Bokenkamp puts it, "To be convincing her construction of legitimacy had to draw upon accepted paradigms of the medieval religious orthodoxies of the day—Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist alike—but in a way diametrically opposed to traditional interpretations, which held that a woman, by virtue of her gender, could not properly rule" (1998, 384). Thus, Wu Zhao's Bright Hall complex combined Buddhist, Confucian and Daoist symbols. The Buddhist Commentary on the *Great Cloud Sutra* was chock full of supporting Daoist prophecies. The Confucian court continued to make major civil and military decisions of state.

Just prior to the inauguration of her Zhou dynasty in 690, Wu Zhao held an open assembly of Confucians, Buddhists, and Daoists—scholars of the three teachings (*sanjiao* 三教)—at which a Confucian scholar lectured on the *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Book of Filial Piety).³ In 698, she declared that "Since Laozi and Sakyamuni come from common origins, Daoism and Buddhism should be weighted equally" (QTW 96.990-1) and "Daoism and Buddhism are both rooted in goodness and effortless action. In the end they are a single faith" (QTW 95.983). From 698 to 701, dozens of scholars worked in Wu Zhao's Institute of Reining Cranes put together the *Sanjiao zhuying* 三教珠英 (Pearls and Flowers of the Three Teachings), an ambitious 1,300-chapter work combining the aggregate wisdom of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism (JTS 47.2046, 78.2707, 97.3050, 104.4014; XTS 59.1563).

³ Liu Xu 劉煦, *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997; hereafter JTS), 22.864.

People of the late seventh century did not belong to a religion, the same manner contemporary folks belong to a political party. Wu Zhao was not simply a Buddhist ruler. If she identified herself exclusively as a Buddhist, she would alienate many constituents of her ideologically diverse empire. As Eugene Wang remarks in *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, “Buddhism found its most powerful promoter in Wu Zetian. Yet her involvement with Buddhism was anything but steady and consistent” (2005, 149). Her ideological support of the “three faiths” waned and waxed at different junctures of her half-century political career. As the only female emperor in Chinese history, presiding over the open and cosmopolitan empire of the late seventh century, Wu Zhao (624-705) necessarily invented a new paradigm of political authority. She was, at once, a Buddhist, a Daoist and a Confucian—a female bodhisattva, a Daoist divinity incarnate, and a dutiful Confucian mother of empire.

While Wu Zhao honored a traditional lineage of male political ancestors—the Yellow Emperor, Yao, Shun, Yu the Great, Tang the Successful, King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Zhou—she carefully affiliated herself with eminent female divinities and paragons of every ideological persuasion. The connections between Wu Zhao and these exalted female figures were promulgated in carefully scripted political rhetoric, reinforced through poetry, celebrated theatrically in her court, and made manifest to all by engraving them upon monumental steles. This purposeful affiliation with past female luminaries, figures eminently familiar in court and country, elegantly rendered with her characteristically deft aesthetic touch, provided Wu Zhao tremendous normative charisma and served to significantly augment her political legitimacy. This paper will examine the curious and multi-faceted role the Queen Mother of the West, a Daoist goddess, played in enhancing Wu Zhao’s political authority and exalting her person.

From Primitive Spirit to Daoist Monarch

The Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母) was the most elevated of the Daoist goddesses. From an array of different early goddesses who appear on oracle bone inscriptions, the Queen Mother of the West comes into clear resolution in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang; trl. Mair 1994) during the Warring States era as a woman who had attained the dao. In the *Xunzi* 荀子 (Book of Master Xun; trl. Knobloch 1994), she was a divine teacher who instructed the legendary flood-queller and Xia founder Yu the Great.⁴ In the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas; trl. Mathieu 1983), the Queen Mother was described as:

a deity who presides over a mountain wilderness in the west and lives among wild beasts. In these accounts she is described as a human with unkempt hair, a panther's tail, and tiger's fangs, and she has a retinue of feline beasts and birds that bring her messages and food...Her mountain realm is designated as being in the west, and it is said to be the sacred range of Kunlun 崑崙 (Birrell 1993, 171).⁵

From this primitive vision, the Queen Mother evolved during the Han, becoming a beautiful ageless divinity, an immortal monarch celebrated in both popular and elite culture, replete with headdress, staff and scepter. According to Bret Hinsch, she emerged in this era as "the first personified female deity to predominate as the focus of popular religious devotion" (2002, 2). According to Liu An's *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Book of the Master of Huainan; trl. Major et al. 2009), she presented an elixir of immortality to Yi the Archer, though it subsequently stolen by Chang E 嫦娥, the Moon Goddess (Birrell 1993, 144-45). This late Western Han text also contains a passage in which the Queen Mother snapped her head-

⁴ See Cahill 1993, 13-15. In the opening chapter, Cahill gives a comprehensive account of the evolution and development of this deity. See also Cahill 2006, 43-69; Loewe 1979, 88-97; Despeux and Kohn 2003, 5-47.

⁵ The *Shanhai jing* is a text of unclear origin that probably dates from the 3rd to the 1st centuries B.C.E. In its chapter "Xici sanjing" (2.19) it has a depiction of the Queen Mother of the West, which shows an early and primitive vision of the deity (Birrell 1993, 174; Cahill 1992, 15-16).

dress, precipitating a string of catastrophes, something Michael Loewe suggests indicates that she might wield some control over the cosmic order and the movement of the constellations (1979, 95, 121). The *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Immortals' Biographies; trl. Kaltenmark 1953), attributed to Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 B.C.E.) viewed the Queen Mother as "creator of Heaven and Earth, molder of all things that are created, mistress acknowledged by all those who ascend to Heaven or descend to Earth" (Loewe 1979, 15; Yü 1981).

In the Han conception of immortality, tallying with the prevalence of yin-yang and five phases thought, there were paradises in both the east and west. The Queen Mother presided over the Western Paradise in the Kunlun Mountains (Loewe 1979, 15; Yü 1981, 81). A tradition of colorful lore grew around her. Western Han wordsmith of supernatural tales, Dongfang Shuo 東方朔, rode one of her wind-striding horses (Edwards 1938, 3, 97). The *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 (Legends of King Mu; trl. Mathieu 1978) describes King Mu of Zhou and the Queen Mother intimately sharing poetry, banqueting and exchanging gifts atop Mount Yan (Birrell 1993, 174-75). There are also stories of the Queen Mother sharing peaches and the secrets of immortality with Han Wudi (Loewe 1979, 116-20).⁶ Fortunate mortal men enjoyed her company.

A rich tradition of iconography and imagery developed around the Queen Mother of the West, who emerged as an important cultic deity in the Eastern Han (Bujard 2002, 115-16). Marshalling iconographic evidence from a series of Han tombs beginning in the 1st century B.C.E., Wu Hung convincingly argues that the Queen Mother supplanted Nü Wa as "the embodiment of yin force" (Wu 1989, 108-41).

In her work, Suzanne Cahill has illustrated that by the Tang the Queen Mother of the West had developed into the highest female deity in the pantheon of the Taoist religion (1993, 58), a powerful patron deity of women who possessed "control over immortality and power to mediate between the divine and human realm" (1986, 155). Timothy Barrett has noted that Tang Daoism, which assigned both importance and power to women, had incorporated an array of female divinities includ-

⁶ He also includes translations from the *Bowuzhi* 博物志 (Record of Ample Things) of the 3rd century or later), the *Han Wu gushi* 漢武故事 (Tales of Emperor Han Wudi) and the *Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳 (The Inner Biography of Emperor Han Wudi; trl. Smith 1992) of the 6th century.

ing the Queen Mother of the West, the Mother of Qi (Qimu 啓母), the Mysterious Woman (Xuannü 玄女) and the Mother of Laozi (Xiantian taihou 先天太后) (1996, 40-41).

Shared Rites and Symbols

Through ceremony and symbol, a colorful array of silk, jade and phoenixes, Wu Zhao connected herself to the Queen Mother of the West. Though these connections were not always explicit, they were presented through culturally legible rites and gestures understood by court and country alike.

The *Shanhai jing* records that the Queen Mother of the West lived on Jade Mountain. As a medium, jade symbolizes incorruptibility and eternal life (Cahill 1993, 15-16). A substance of beauty and power, jade (*yu* 玉) shares a radical with "king" (*wang* 王). When King Mu of Zhou and the Queen Mother exchanged gifts atop Mount Yan, he offered her a white jade token (Cahill 2006, 57). There is a Han story of a scholar-recluse who rescued a messenger of the Queen Mother of the West, a golden sparrow. In return, assuming human form and making known his position in the Queen Mother's service, a yellow-clad man presented his rescuer four white jade rings and promised that his savior's offspring would rise to become eminent officials (Loewe 1979, 100).⁷ In 676, Cui Shen 催僊, the Prefect of Chuzhou, presented "thirteen treasures of state" at the court of the Celestial Emperor and Celestial Empress—as Gaozong and Wu Zhao were known at the time. The fourth treasure consisted of two rings belonging to the Queen Mother of the West, a token of obedience from conquered nations (JTS 37.1374; XTS 35.914).⁸ Thus, as Celestial Empress, Wu Zhao came to possess this jade token of the Queen Mother, at once a token of her magical power and a tally of political authority.

Through this precious medium of white jade, one can find further connections between the earthly ruler and the celestial sovereign. The

⁷ He refers to Wu Jun's 吳均 (469-520) *Xu Qi jieji* 續齊諧記 (Continuation of all Qi dynasty Writings) as cited in *Hou Hanshu* 54.

⁸ The date is given as 675 (Shangyuan 2) in the XTS. Li Fang 李方, *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996; hereafter TPGJ), 404.3254 indicates that the presentation of the rings did not occur during Wu Zhao's reign, but at a later date. Schafer also makes reference to these rings (1963), 36.

Taiping guangji relates a story in which the Queen Mother of the West presented a white jade—which seems to be a preferred ceremonial medium for the Queen Mother—*guan* 琯 ritual tube to Emperor Shun. In the Han, the white jade *guan* was found under Shun's shrine. Ritual specialists learned how the ancients used these ceremonial instruments to harmonize men and spirits. The technique was called "regulation of the phoenix" (*fenghuang yi* 鳳凰儀) (TPGJ 203.1530).⁹ *Yi* can mean "to regulate" or "regulator," a kind of ritual instrument (*yiqi* 儀器) (Forte 1988, 16-18). When Gaozong offered to abdicate to Wu Zhao in 676, a phoenix, a potent auspicious omen of female imperial power, was sighted in Chenzhou, prompting the inauguration of Phoenix Regulator (*Yifeng* 儀鳳), a reign era whose name tacitly announced the harmony between the celestial and terrestrial realms (JTS 5.102; see Rothschild 2005).

There are further indications that the phoenix was an important symbol of power for both the Queen Mother of the West and Wu Zhao. Wu Hong has remarked that in the Wu Liang shrine, the Queen Mother wore a "Crown of Five Phoenixes" (*wufeng guan* 五鳳琯) (Wu 1989, 111). According to one source, likely from the Six Dynasties era, atop Kunlun—the mountain home of the Queen Mother of the West—stood a massive bronze pillar that reached the heavens. Atop the pillar was an immense bird, facing southward. Ever outstretched, his massive wingspan sheltered the Queen Mother to the West and the King Father to the East (Loewe 1979, 124-125, 155n.200).¹⁰ Though it is not clear whether this monumental creature was a phoenix, it seems possible that this pillar-crowning avian inspired Wu Zhao to crown both of her Bright Hall complexes with massive ornaments of phoenixes, their wings outspread.¹¹ In 688, when her first Bright Hall, the three hundred foot Divine Palace of Myriad Images was completed, its crowning ornament was a

⁹ The *guan* is a ritual tube akin to the *cong* 琮, an instrument used by shamans in communicating with spirits, with Heaven.

¹⁰ The passage is cited in Li Daoyuan's 6th-century *Shuijing zhu* 水經注, (Commentary on the Classic of Waters), attributed to Dongfang Shuo's 東方朔 *Shenyi jing* 神異經, (Classic of the Divine and Anomalous), though Loewe notes that it is thought to be a later production, of the Six Dynasties period.

¹¹ In the "Book of Zhou" chapter of the in the *Guoyu* 國語 (Discourses on the States), it is the call of the *yuezhuo* from Mount Qishan that announces the advent of the original Zhou dynasty.

ten-foot tall gilded iron phoenix poised for flight (JTS 22.862).¹² Wu Zhao named her second Bright Hall, completed in 696, Penetrating Heaven Palace (Tongtiangong 通天宮), and topped it with a finial phoenix taking flight, twice as large as the first.¹³

The name Penetrating Heaven (Tongtian 通天) provides another curious link between Wu Zhao and the Queen Mother of the West. In 110 B.C.E. when Han Wudi, mortal lover of the Queen Mother, performed the *feng* and *shan* rites on Mount Tai, he constructed a Penetrating Heaven Terrace (Tongtiantai 通天台) to commune with immortals (Loewe 1979, 97). It is no coincidence that Wu Zhao's sky-piercing Penetrating Heaven Palace was constructed in the same year she performed the *feng* and *shan* rites on Mount Song.

A shared involvement in sericulture ties provides further suggestion of linkage between the earthly ruler of the late seventh century and the Daoist goddess. In the *Bieguo dongming ji*, Dongfang Shuo observed the Queen Mother of the West picking mulberry leaves. In the History of the Latter Han, it was recorded that during the ceremonial gathering of mulberry leaves imperial ladies wore a sheng 勝, the signature headdress of the Queen Mother (Loewe 1979, 120; also Cahill 1992, 16-17).

As Empress, Wu Zhao performed the First Sericulturist rites (*xian-can* 先蠶) four times between 656 and 675. These rites were performed sporadically throughout imperial history in China, beginning in the Western Han. The *xiancan* were only performed eight times in the Tang, and Wu Zhao accounted for four of these in these two decades (Chen 1994, 79, 107n12). Playing the ceremonial role of First Lady of the empire, paralleling Gaozong's 高宗 role in breaking the earth to mark the beginning of planting season, she led palace women and wives of high ranking officials to pick mulberry leaves and feed them to silkworms in the late spring.¹⁴

The last of these four performances in the third month of 675, was a large scale and public ceremony in which court officials and territorial representatives (prefects) from around the empire gathered in atten-

¹² See also Wang Pu 王溥, *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1998; hereafter THY), 11.277; and ZZTJ 204. 6454. Also see Forte 1988, 156-158.

¹³ Du You 杜佑, *Tongdian* 通典 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988; hereafter TD), 44.254; JTS 22.867; THY 11.279, ZZTJ 205.6505.

¹⁴ JTS 4.75, 5.92, 98, 100; XTS 3.57, 67, 71; TD 46.1290.

dance (ZZTJ 202.6375).¹⁵ Chen Jo-shui sees her performance of these rites as part of a “proto-feminist” agenda, “a larger pattern of actions promoting the position and interests of women” (1994, 79-80). Wu Zhao’s performance of the *xiancan* rite honored both the Queen Mother and silk goddess Leizu 嫫祖, wife of the Yellow Emperor. Of course, the very act of paying homage in a public ceremony served to make manifest to court and country Wu Zhao’s connection to these female divinities and thereby exalt herself and legitimize her political authority. To all those present, even if the Queen Mother of the West and Leizu were not explicitly mentioned, even though these ceremonies were not unique to her, the Empress’s repeated public performance of these sericulture rites was a culturally legible ritual gesture that evoked the aura of these two divinities, and identified the female sovereign with them.

In symbol and ritual, Wu Zhao consciously evoked the Queen Mother of the West. The Chuzhou prefect’s presentation of the rings of white jade illustrates that political supporters of Wu Zhao actively sought symbols to connect their Celestial Empress to the Queen Mother of the West. For Celestial Empress as for Queen Mother, the phoenix developed into an important symbol of harmonious order and regulatory authority. Wu Zhao’s performance of the First Sericulturist rites honored the Queen Mother of the West and the silk goddess while, in turn, connecting her with both divinities. Most of these shared symbols appear during Wu Zhao’s time as Gaozong’s empress, a time when she, in the words of Eugene Wang, “eagerly maintained the imperial clan’s interest in Daoism” (2005, 148).

Connected by Celestial Light

Ever willing to draw upon efficacious symbols of power and majesty, Wu Zhao incorporated both celestial orbs, male sun and female moon, into her repertoire. Like the Daoist goddess, the female sovereign appropriated celestial symbols from hoary myth: the sunbird (*yangniao* 陽鳥), the mythological three-legged solar crow, with origins dating back to the Eastern Yi culture in the 3rd millennium B.C.E., and the lunar hare and toad (Wu 1985, 30-32).

¹⁵ Chen suggests that the grander scale of the rite may be the result of Wu Zhao’s recent assumption of the title Celestial Empress (1994, 107).

In *Ways of Paradise*, Michael Loewe remarks that during the Han dynasty the crescent moon, with toad and hare, and the solar disc, encircling a sunbird or crow, became recurring symbols associated with the Queen Mother of the West (1979, 52 and 103).¹⁶ In Sima Xiangru's 司馬相如 Western Han poem *Daren fu* 大人賦 (Rhapsody on the Great Man, written for Han Wudi, the Queen Mother of the West is described as possessing a three-legged crow, which served her as a messenger. (Loewe 1979, 94). Loewe has suggested that the three-legged sunbird may represent the evolution of the Queen Mother's trio of avian messengers from earlier tradition (Loewe 1979, 128).¹⁷ In any event, in the Eastern Han and into the Six Dynasties, the hare, toad and sunbird joined the nine-tailed fox in the Queen Mother of the West's impressive train of courtiers, her flamboyant immortal bestiary.

This solar crow also played a prominent role in Wu Zhao's court. The *Taiping guangji* includes the following story:

In the era of the Celestial Empress, someone offered a three-legged bird as tribute. Someone in the court said, "One of the legs is fake." The Celestial Empress laughed, and ordered the scribe to record it in the annals, remarking, "What's the use of examining whether it's real or fake?" The *Tang History* recorded, in Tianshou 天授 1 (690) somebody presented a three-legged bird. The Celestial Empress took it to be an auspicious omen of the House of Zhou. Ruizong 睿宗 remarked, "The front leg is fake." The Celestial Empress was displeased. Shortly, one leg fell off. (462.3796)¹⁸

¹⁶ The iconography of low relief sculpture and images on TLV-mirrors often show these symbolic creatures of the celestial bodies. The famous T-shaped Mawangdui funerary banner from the 2nd century B.C.E. shows both lunar toad and solar crow.

¹⁷ Loewe cites multiple sources to illustrate that by the 1st century B.C.E. the concept of the three-legged sunbird was clearly imbedded (1979, ch. 5).

¹⁸ It is difficult to tell whether this passage, originally from the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang), refers to the same presentation of a three-legged bird or to two separate presentations. Wu Zhao assumed the title Celestial Empress (*tianhou* 天后) in 674, but in 688 she became "Sage Mother, Divine Sovereign" (*shengmu shenhuang* 聖母神皇). In 690, when she established her Zhou dynasty, she took the title Saintly and Divine August Emperor (*sheng-shen huangdi* 聖神皇帝). This makes the passage difficult, because by 690, the only

Aware of the great political currency invested in auspicious icons, men vied to present Wu Zhao with jade rings, sunbirds and other symbols that, broadcast properly, announced Heaven's endorsement of her rule. Such presentations, of course, also offered these men a path of rapid career advancement.

Further evidence corroborates the idea that Wu Zhao consciously augmented her political luster with images of celestial illumination. Twelve new characters were created for Wu Zhao in 689 upon the inauguration of the Origin of Records reign era (Zaichu 載初). Three of these new characters, those for "sun," "moon," and her invented name Zhao 曁, all reflect a conscious effort on Wu Zhao's part to, like the Queen Mother of the West, affiliate herself with both celestial bodies. Her new "sun," based on the archaic *zhuan* character for "sun," featured a circumscribed avian shape. This character is featured in the Han dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字.

According to Shi Anchang's investigation of funerary epitaphs and other inscriptions, in 697 the character for "moon" changed from 𠂔 to 𠂔 (1983, 37). In appearance, the character *chu* 出 looks like a crouching animal, such as the traditional inhabitants, the hare or toad. This creature parallels the solar crow found in the new character for sun (Li 1997, 56). The toad is pressed flat, legs splayed to the sides. Perhaps this character is best understood as an effort by Wu Zhao to draw on a deeply ingrained mythological tradition to associate herself with Chang E, the goddess of the moon, overseer of the lunar toad and jade hare who help decoct the elixir of immortality.

The sunbird and the new characters for "sun" and "moon" were part of Wu Zhao's intentional development of a repertoire of common symbols she shared with the Queen Mother of the West. In these symbols, those in Wu Zhao's court and those viewing edicts bearing the new characters, men for whom the solar crow and lunar denizens were familiar motifs, naturally felt the consonance between their female ruler and the Queen Mother of the West. Nonetheless, there is no direct evidence Wu Zhao used either the sunbird or her new characters to make manifest her connection with the Queen Mother of the West.

date given in the *Taiping guangji* episode, she was no longer known as Celestial Emperor.

Indeed, at the juncture the solar crow was presented in her court and the new characters were first introduced in 689, she looked to Buddhism as her primary ideological support. Yet even as Buddhism approached its apogee, as a veritable army of monks compiled Buddhist propaganda and a sky-piercing Bright Hall featuring a massive five-story Buddhist pagoda appeared in her capital Luoyang, Buddhism did not hold a monopoly on symbol in Wu Zhao's court. These characters were unique signets of Wu Zhao's imperial sovereignty, powerful symbols indelibly imprinting her image on language that functioned on many levels—as part of the state calendar, as representations of celestial bodies, as signs to remind ministers of her authority. Evoking Wu Zhao's connection with the Queen Mother of the West was certainly not the primary intent of these new characters: it was simply another benefit of the lexical ambivalence afforded by these symbols.

Ageless, Timeless, Beautiful

In her waning years, as Wu Zhao's thoughts turned to the promises of longevity and immortality offered by Daoist elixirs, she looked once more to the Queen Mother of the West for inspiration. In his *Yongcheng jixian lu* 壙城集仙錄 (Record of the Collected Transcendents of the Walled City, trl. Cahill 2006), the Daoist hagiographer Du Guangting (850-933) provided a physical description of the Queen Mother of the West: "Her age might have been around twenty. Her celestial appearance eclipsed and put in the shade all others. Her numinous complexion was unique to the world" (Cahill 1986, 156). Though she was centuries old, the Queen Mother, at least in the Tang imagination, was no longer a primitive beast-woman presiding over a jagged border peak, but a vital goddess who eternally projected youth and beauty.

When Wu Zhao, in her mid-sixties, became Emperor, she took great pains to project vitality and agelessness. She linked of her physical self to the state ritual calendar, tying the inauguration of the Protracted Longevity reign era (23 October 692 to 9 June 694) to her personal rejuvenation. The *Zizhi tongjian* describes the rationale behind the naming of the Protracted Longevity era:

Although the Grand Dowager had passed through many springs and autumns, she excelled at applying cosmetics and

adornments to herself, so that even her own attendants did not feel her decrepit. On bing-xu, she issued an imperial edict declaring that because her lost teeth had regrown, on the *gengzi* day of the ninth month, she went to the Zetian gate, declare a general amnesty, and change the reign era to Protracted Longevity. The sacrifice to the earth god was changed to the ninth month. (205.6487; also XTS 76.3482)

To realign and synchronize the terrestrial and celestial with her remarkable dental regeneration, this springtime in her autumn years, the sacrifice to the earth god, which had corresponded with the breaking of the earth and planting in the early spring, was now shifted to the final month of autumn. Like any emperor, Wu Zhao was deeply preoccupied with her mortality, and strove to project an image of vitality, timelessness and agelessness. A wizened, toothless hag does not present an image of "Protracted Longevity." Yet it is clear that she was aware of traces of aging, wrinkles and creases, and made a concerted effort to disguise these mortal blemishes. Like many Tang women, she was expert at applying powders, rouges, creams, ointments, mascara, and oils to disguise the ravages of time. Secular power was buttressed by the sense that the sovereign was, like the Queen Mother, otherworldly, not beholden to the same limits of space and time as other mortals.

In 700, Wu Zhao's inauguration of the Distant Vision reign era celebrated the good health and longevity on the 76-year-old female Emperor. The circumstances are described in the *Zizhi tongjian*:

The Grand Dowager commissioned Hongzhou monk Hu Chao to decoct a longevity potion. After three years it was completed, wasting millions of cash in the process. When the Grand Dowager imbibed it, her illness was slightly cured. On gui-chou [27 May 700], she declared an empire-wide amnesty and changed the reign name to Distant Vision. (206.6546)¹⁹

"Distant Vision" 久視 (*jiushi*) refers to *Daode jing* 59: "When a ruler possesses the mother of the state, he can then endure. This is the way of deep roots and firm stems by which one lives to see many days" (see Lau

¹⁹ JTS 6. 129 suggests that the potion was more efficacious, recording that the new reign era began because "she recovered from illness."

1963). *Jiushi* means never growing old, maintaining clear wit and perspicacity. Wu Zhao's recovery occasioned the change of a reign-era and a five-day congratulatory feast, at which her subjects might raise many a cup to toast her long life and good health (XTS 4.101). Thus, like the immortal goddess in the Tang imagination, Wu Zhao cultivated an image of timeless youthful vitality.

Creating a Daoist Paradise on Earth

It has been well documented that in the last seven or eight years of Wu Zhao's life, she turned—as so many Chinese rulers did in senescence—toward Daoism in an aggressive search for longevity and immortality (e.g., Barrett 1996, 44-45). In *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, Eugene Wang observes that Wu Zhao's disappointment with the political capital of "ostentatious Buddhist trappings stage-managed by Xue Huaiyi" and her growing obsession with prolonging her life and seeking immortality both led to a growing interest in Daoism in the post-695 period (2005, 149). Perhaps the greatest influence the Queen Mother of the West exerted on Wu Zhao can be seen in the emergent cult of Prince Jin 王子晉 [喬] during this final period.

Under Wu Zhao, the Queen Mother of the West became closely identified with Mount Song, the Central Peak (Zhongyue 中岳) of the Five Marchmounts (Wuyue 五岳) located close to the female ruler's political heart, Luoyang. As Grand Dowager, Wu Zhao designated Luoyang her "Divine Capital" (Shendu 神都) and declared Mount Song the Divine Peak (Shenyue 神岳) (JTS 6.117-19; XTS 4.83, 87; ZZTJ 203.6421, 6449). Mount Song's emergence as a vital ritual for Wu Zhao was made manifest as early as the first lunar month of 683, when on an outing a newly-completed mountain palace, Wu Zhao and her ailing husband Gaozong sent emissaries to offer sacrifices at the shrine of the Queen Mother of the West on Mount Song (JTS 5.110; THY 7.102). For the dying Emperor and the sexagenarian Grand Dowager, such a sacrifice enhanced the sense that their earthly summer palace in the crags of Mount Song was akin to the legendary mountain citadel of the Queen Mother of the West.

To further illustrate that in the imagined topography of the Tang Mount Song was seen as a Daoist fairyland of sorts, of Wu Zhao's

granddaughter, Princess Jade Verity 玉真公主, herself a Daoist priestess, legendary Tang poet Li Bo 李白 waxed rhapsodic:

Whenever she enters the Lesser Room (Xiaoshi 小室),
The Queen Mother will certainly be there to meet her.
(Cahill 1993, 217)²⁰

The Lesser Room is a peak on Mount Song 嵩山. Significantly, both in Wu Zhao's worship and Li Bo's poem, the Queen Mother was not on the snow-capped peaks of Kunlun, but on nearby Mount Song, localized and much more accessible.

A second mountain in the region was also associated with the Queen Mother of the West. Situated even closer to Luoyang, Mount Goushi 緱氏 was a short, flat-topped hill thirty kilometers west of imposing Mount Song, a locale believed to possess a numinous aura. Mount Goushi was associated closely in Wu Zhao's time with both the Queen Mother of the West. In the biography of the Queen Mother of the West in the opening chapter of Du Guangting's *Register of the Collected Transcendents of the Walled City*, it is recorded that "the Queen Mother was born at the Yi River [near Luoyang] in Divine Island [China]. Her surname was Gou" (Cahill 2006, 51).

Her Gou 緱 is the same as that of Mount Goushi. The *Taiping guangji* contains a biography the Immortal Maiden of the Gou clan, who originally heralded from Changsha in Hunan. In her nineties, on the verge of transcendence, she was cultivating the dao in solitude at the altar of famous Daoist Wei Huacun in the dangerous wilderness. The immortal goddess of the Southern Marchmount sent a long-tailed, talking green bird with a red-capped head that resembled a mourning dove. This messenger bird informed her that, "The surname of the Queen Mother of the West was Gou. . . In Henan there is a Mount Goushi. That was where the Queen Mother cultivated the dao" (TPGJ 70.435-6).²¹ By the Tang and

²⁰ I have changed Cahill's translation of the peak name from "Minor Apartment Peak" to "Lesser Room." Wu Zhao performed the *shan* sacrifice to earth, part of her grand *feng* and *shan* rites at the Lesser Room.

²¹ The passage goes on to relate a famous episode in which a group of ten ill-intentioned monks came to harm the Woman of the Gou clan and to burn and desecrate Wei Huacun's shrine. Though the guardian woman sat quietly on her

Song, as these sources attest, the Queen Mother was identified with more accessible and local sites like Mount Goushi and Mount Song, rather than fanciful distant, snow-capped peaks of Kunlun.

This connection between the Daoist goddess and Mount Gou is likely what prompted Han Wudi, so deeply connected in myth and legend with the Queen Mother of the West, to stop at Mount Gou in 110 B.C.E.²² In the seventh month of 675, when Wu Zhao's eldest son, Crown Prince Li Hong, was buried in the proximity of Mount Goushi, Goushi County was established (JTS 5.100).

At this point it is essential to introduce Prince Jin, son of the Eastern Zhou King Ling 靈王 (r. 571-545 B.C.E.). Prince Jin, disgusted with his father's maladministration—in Wu Zhao's own account, King Ling planned to dam a local river during a deluge to protect the royal palaces and the capital Luoyang, diverting the flood eastward to submerge the dwellings of the common people. When the prince remonstrated, he was banished as a commoner. In the end, however, King Ling's plan to build dams and dikes was not implemented, and the dismissed Prince Jin became a folk hero. The high-minded noble became an ascetic, playing a flute as he roamed the Yi and Luo River valleys.

Lord Fuqiu 浮丘, a wandering immortal, taught Prince Jin the art of crane riding, a sublime skill usually reserved for spirits and fairies. Finally, from the bald crown of Mount Goushi, Prince Jin ascended to become an immortal, taking leave of his contrite father, the Zhou court, and adoring throngs on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, the popular prince ascended on a red-capped crane to join the Jade Emperor and the Daoist immortals above. On the site where Prince Jin departed, King Ling erected an Ascended Immortal Observatory (Shengxian guan

bed, the monks were unable to see her. A deep rumbling from the earth scared the monks off. As they ran through the forest, nine of ten were devoured by tigers. The survivor propagated the harrowing tale. In "Virtual Images/Real Shadows: The Transposition of the Myths and Cults of Lady Wei" (draft of paper presented at 2003 AAS, 42), James Robson has translated Du Guangting's "An Examination of the Immortal Altar of Lady Wei of the Southern Marchmount" Nanyue Wei furen xiantan yan 南嶽魏夫人仙壇驗 from the *Daojiao lingyanji* (Evidential Miracles in Support of Daoism, Daozang 道藏 590) one of several sources that contain the story of the immortal altar's power to ward off the interlopers.

²² Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書(Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996), 6.

升仙觀 (QTW 98.1007-08; also TPGJ 4.24). Two of the peaks on the Greater Ridge of Mount Song are called Zijin 子晉, after Prince Jin, and Fuqiu, after Prince Jin's Daoist immortal instructor.²³ Over time, a regional cult of Prince Jin developed—he was recognized as a local tutelary deity and a Daoist transcendent. Marianne Bujard has catalogued the evolution of this cult and illustrated numerous examples of imperial patronage of Prince Jin during the Han, the Period of Disunity and the Tang (Bujard 2000, 146).

Once Wu Zhao became Emperor in 690, Mount Song loomed even larger. In 696, she performed the sacrosanct *feng* and *shan* rites on the Divine Peak (ZZTJ 206.6503-04). Shortly thereafter, on the xin-yi day of the second month (17 March 696), she honored the deity of Mount Song as Emperor of the Center of Heaven and elevated Prince Jin, to become Ascended Immortal Prince 升仙太子 (see Rothschild 2005, 86-87n.37). From the text of her Preface for the Stele of the Ascended Immortal Prince 升仙太子碑序, we know that on her return trip to Luoyang, she stopped by Mount Goushi and, seeing the shrine devoted to Prince Jin in a state of disrepair, ordered it rebuilt and named Temple of the Ascended Immortal Prince 升仙太子廟 (QTW 98.1009).

According to the *Zizhi tongjian*, in the first month of 699, when Emperor Wu Zhao made a progress to Mount Song and stopped at Mount Goushi again, at the Temple of the Ascended Immortal Crown Prince" (206.6539).²⁴ Next to the temple Wu Zhao had established several years earlier, she erected the Commemorative Stele of the Ascended Immortal Prince. The strokes of the title characters on the stele are a series of beautiful, ornate birds.²⁵ Wu Zhao's Preface of the Commemorative Stele of the Ascended Immortal Crown Prince is of the broken into six parts: the

²³ *Dengfeng xian zhi* 登峰縣志, 1.2 and 2.31 (reprinted Dengfeng, 1988).

²⁴ Following the Zhou calendar as Wu Zhao did, the first month was really the third month, following the prime month (*zhengyue* 正月) and the hibernal month (*layue* 臘月). It is interesting to note that during this outing to Mount Goushi, one of the members of the Institute (JTS 78.2706), Daoist Yan Chaoyin, prayed on Wu Zhao's behalf when she was feeling under the weather. He cleansed himself and, lying on a ritual meat-stand, offering his very life in her stead. When she felt better, he was richly rewarded (ZZTJ 206.6538).

²⁵ The stele still exists. Kegasawa shows an illustration of the characters (1995, 318). See also Wang and Xu 1997, 240-244.

efficacy of the dao, the auspicious geomancy of Mount Goushi; a history of Prince Jin; an account of Heaven's endorsement of the political successes of Wu Zhao's Zhou dynasty; Wu Zhao's commitment to Daoism and determination to rebuild the Temple of the Ascended Immortal Prince; and her composed twelve-verse commemorative poem for the inscription (division follows Wang 2003).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to exhaustively analyze the implications of this rich and important work upon Daoism, but a few sections warrant particular attention. Wu Zhao begins her eloquently rhapsody about the blessed ground of Mount Goushi by imagining a host of immortals setting out from the west gate of Luoyang and paying their respects to the Queen Mother of the West on Kunlun. The Queen Mother is also mentioned in one of the verses in the final section: in the section on her decision to build a new temple for Prince Jin, she mentions that the year before she writes the inscription (698), she sent an emissary to the temple site to offer a sacrifice to Prince Jin. On the day the rite was performed, she heard from the distant heavens the strains of an immortal's flute sounding like the mellifluous call of a phoenix and could almost see an immortal astride a red-capped crane descending from on high to offer a greeting—no doubt, Prince Jin offering his thanks.

Wu Zhao was by no means the first ruler to celebrate the cult of Prince Jin. To understand her sudden interest in the cult of this lesser Daoist immortal and its connection to her worship of the Queen Mother of the West, it is important to look at the emergence of two favorites in her court, Zhang Yizhi 張易之 and Zhang Changzong 張昌宗.

According to the Sui manual of the sexual arts, the *Yixin fang* 醫心方 (Machinations of Medicine and the Heart)—citing an earlier text, the *Yufang bijue* 玉房秘訣 (Secret Instructions of the Jade Bedchamber)—the Queen Mother of the West gained her immortality, her everlasting youth, through maintaining a state of composed tranquility and by nurturing her yin essence by copulating with young boys (Van Gulik 1961, 158; Wile 1992, 102). Perhaps septuagenarian Wu Zhao, drawing on the basic Daoist notion that young male yang essence could rejuvenate old female yin essence, acted on the recommendation of her daughter, the Taiping Princess, to bring Zhang Changzong and Zhang Yizhi into her inner quarters in 697. These dashing youths, skilled in music and well-versed in poetry, accoutered in colorful silks and wearing vermilion rouge, rap-

idly emerged as Wu Zhao's male favorites. Soon court officials served as personal valets for the Zhangs' mothers, and Wu Zhao's nephews and grandnephews addressed the Zhangs reverently as "Fifth Master" and "Sixth Master," while vying for the honor of stabling their horses.²⁶ In 698, Wu Zhao set up the Institute for Reining Cranes.²⁷ Zhang Yizhi was made Director (ZZTJ 206.6538).

In 700, Wu Zhao's nephew Wu Sansi sent forth a memorial claiming that Zhang Changzong was the incarnation of Prince Jin of the Eastern Zhou dynasty. As a result, Wu Zhao ordered that Zhang Changzong don a feathered garment, play a flute, and prance around the court astraddle a wooden crane.²⁸ The feathered raiment may have been the extraordinary "Flock of Kingfishers" cloak worth "more than a thousand gold" presented at Wu Zhao's court by emissaries from Guangzhou (Nanhai Commandery 南海郡), a garment she bestowed upon Zhang Changzong (TPGJ 405.3267).²⁹

²⁶ JTS 78.2706-8 (biography), XTS 104.4014-6 (biography) and ZZTJ 206.6514. In the *Old Tang History*, the biography of the Zhangs discredits their skills in the arts of *wen*, suggesting that most of the works attributed to them were in fact ghostwritten by literary masters like Song Zhiwen and Yan Chaoyin.

²⁷ ZZTJ 206.6526-7. The precise timing of the establishment of the Institute is not clear. ZZTJ 206.6538 indicates the Institute was set up in the prime (zheng 正) month of 699. This passage, under 698 in the *Zizhi tongjian*, indicates that at the behest of minister Ji Xiu the Zhangs, to defuse the "teeth-gnashing" loathing of court and populace, endorsed the re-establishment of Li Xian, Prince of Luling, as Crown Prince—a decision that would effectively hand power back to the Tang dynasts, the Li family, after Wu Zhao's death. In the commentary that follows, the timing of Ji Xiu's advice is set in the hibernal month of 699.

²⁸ ZZTJ 206.6546; JTS 78.2706-7; XTS 104.4014, 206.5840; TPGJ 188.1406. In TPGJ 240.1854, an anecdote drawn from Zhang Zhuo's 張鷟 *Chaoye jianzai* 朝野僉載 (Records of Court and Country) indicates that Wu Sansi wrote a biography of Zhang Yizhi, contending that he (and not brother, Changzong) was the incarnation of Prince Jin.

²⁹ This passage contains a curious anecdote in which staunch Confucian minister Di Renjie 狄仁傑 entered the inner palace to find Changzong clad in the gaudy, colorful cloak, engaged in a game of backgammon with Wu Zhao. The female Emperor bid Di Renjie be seated and play a game with Zhang Changzong. When asked to determine the stakes, Di Renjie offered to put up his purple Prime Minister's robe against the "Flock of Kingfishers" cloak. When Wu Zhao pointed out the tremendous value of Changzong's robe, the stalwart minister retorted,

In his slavish effort to flatter and further exalt Zhang Changzong, Wu Zhao's nephew Wu Sansi wrote the "Verse of the Immortal Cranes," which appears in the Complete Book of Tang Poetry. The opening includes the lines:

Riding the immortal crane into the firmament whither soars he?
From Mount Goushi in the seventh month he flies into the distance. . .
From Mount Goushi he mysteriously ascends into the boundless emptiness.³⁰

Other court officials also wrote lavish poems of praise tying Zhang Changzong to Prince Jin. The biography on the Zhangs in the Old Tang History contains a four-stanza poem attributed to literary master Cui Rong 崔融:

In the past he encountered Duke Fuqiu;
Today he is like Ding Lingwei.
The Palace Attendant [Zhang Changzong] has talent and appearance;
But his name is not that of the archivist. (JTS 78.2706)³¹

"This robe of your humble minister is a garment one wears to court when memorializing the throne. Changzong's clothing, however, is a garment worn by favorites and flatterers. Swayed by his persuasive argument, Wu Zhao then granted the wager. Zhang Changzong, having listened to Di Renjie's argument, felt out of sorts and depressed and lost the backgammon match. He left with the precious "Flock of Kingfishers" cloak, which, upon reaching a city gate, he gave to a slave. See Schafer 1963, 114, 307n87.

³⁰ Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 ed., *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1995; hereafter QTS), 80.865-866.

³¹ Cui Rong's poem also appears in the Ming dynasty erotic novella, Ruyi-jun zhuan 如意君傳 (The Lord of Perfect Satisfaction, Stone 2003, 90. Stone sees the poem as subtly insinuating that Zhang Changzong "should enjoy his odious status as Wu Zetian's paramour while he can" because such favor, far from immortal, is transient. The "archivist," he argues, was a reference to Laozi, whose surname—like that of the displaced House of Tang—was Li. Alternatively, one might adhere to Stone's understanding, yet spin Cui Rong's intention in a very different manner. Perhaps the verse reflects the dramatic ascent of the cult of Prince Jin as a major divinity in the Daoist pantheon. In TPGJ 240.1854, a chapter

Both Duke Fuqiu, Prince Jin's divine tutor, and Ding Lingwei, are Daoist immortals.

A body of literary and aesthetic masters including Song Zhiwen, Li Qiao and Xue Ji—all members of the Institute for Reining Cranes—produced the 1300-chapter *Sanjiao zhuying*, a broad-reaching anthology that sought to systemically gather the sum total of Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian wisdom. Still, because of the rumors swirling around the Institute, many argued the project was little more than an elaborate aesthetic gloss to cover the stench of the riotous carousing, boisterous feasting and other lascivious goings-on in the inner palace, a transparent attempt to squelch the cacophony of criticism from the court (JTS 78.2706-7; XTS 104.4014-5; ZZTJ 206.6546).

The emergence of Mount Goushi as a ritual center, associated with both Prince Jin and the Queen Mother of the West, can be understood in terms of Wu Zhao's ongoing effort to transform greater Luoyang into sanctified ground unmistakably connected to her imperial person and indelibly imprinted with her image. The emergent cult of Prince Jin signaled a shift in Wu Zhao's imperial favor during her later years from the Buddhist utopias to Daoist fairylands. In 698, she made her son Li Xian 李顯 Heir Apparent once again, a decision that effectively announced her intention to return the empire to the House of Tang (ZZTJ 206.6534).

Rather than deal with the constant pressures of her dissension-ridden court, in her later years Wu Zhao retreated to her mountain villas with increasing frequency or indulged in the flamboyant gaiety the Zhangs provided in her inner quarters. This desire to retreat from the infighting and factionalism of her court is reflected in her poem *Shizong* 石淙 (Stony Torrents) written in 700:

Drenched in cloaks of mist, stop.
Take joy in feasting
Admire the creek-lover's wisdom, the charity of hills.
And then, on jeweled saddles,
As twilight falls, above the roiling world, we'll fly away.

on "sycophants and favorites," Cui Rong is mentioned as being the most shamelessly fawning of the sycophants poetically toadying to the Zhangs. TPGJ 250.1935 attributes the poem to Zhang Changling rather than Cui Rong.

(QTS 5.58; Larsen 2005, 25).

In her tone, one readily detects Wu Zhao's delight in escaping to the comforting vastness of the mountains and dales south of Luoyang. Stony Torrents is a gorge near Mount Song. On the same outing in 700, Wu Zhao commanded those in her entourage to write poems to commemorate their outing to Shizong. Wu Sansi, the nephew who cast Zhang Changzong as Prince Jin, wrote the *Xianhe bian* 仙鶴編 (Verse of the Immortal Crane), tacitly setting his aunt a Daoist immortal.

From this place, layered with several thousand cliffs and ravines,
My sovereign ascends mounted on a crane, riding a dragon. . .
(QTS 80.865)

And if Zhang Changzong was Prince Jin, then who in the Daoist pantheon could Wu Zhao be other than the Queen Mother of the West?

Suzanne Cahill has shown that on this famous outing to Shizong, the poet-courtier Yao Chong consciously drew upon images like King Mu's "westward procession culminating in a supernatural feast," to depict Wu Zhao's court entourage as a company of Daoist immortals. Yao Chong's poem on the occasion indicates that Wu Zhao excelled two rulers of the past with whom the Queen Mother of the West was closely intertwined, King Mu of Zhou and Han Wudi:

Long ago, a Zhou king declined the bounty of the Turquoise Pond,
And a Han ruler felt anxious and ashamed at the Jade Tree Palace.
Now, on the other hand, we have auspicious mists paired with beautiful breaths,
Which can follow the light palanquin: altogether profuse.
(Cahill 1993, 132-33)

While these male rulers of the past were ill at ease in the immortal presence of Queen Mother of the West, Yao Chong implies, his own sovereign was in her element.

The poem of favorite Zhang Yizhi to commemorate the occasion—the outing to Stony Torrents—more explicitly linked his redoubtable patroness to the Queen Mother:

With alacrity, six dragons raise their heads in clarion announcement
 As the Seven Sages join the Yellow Emperor, gathering in the shade of the Ying River.
 A thousand zhang tall, pines intertwine with wisteria, forming an emerald canopy.
 The entire mountainscape echoes with avian calls and strains of flute,
 As white cloud and bluebird, emissaries of the Queen Mother, Part the hanging vines and creepers that make men's hearts grow wild.
 As the evening sun settles in a secret crevasse deep in the mountains
 with airy nonchalance a zephyr blows flowers earthward. (QTS 80.867)³²

This association was not unique. Citing many instances in which a Daoist priestesses and recluses were explicitly affiliated with the Queen Mother in verse, Cahill has remarked that Tang poems sometimes “compare especially lofty or talented priestesses and adepts to the Queen Mother” (Cahill 1986,164)

Wu Zhao's desire to associate herself with the Queen Mother of the West was most readily apparent in her later years: in her establishment of the Institute of Reining Cranes; in the development of Mount Goushi into a cultic center for Prince Jin, in Zhang Changzong's theatrical portrayal of this crane-riding Daoist immortal, and in her recurring role as Queen Mother of the West in the poetry of her courtiers. She played the Queen Mother of the West to his Prince Jin, a role she assumed only after deciding to pass the empire back to her son, to the House of Tang. Wu Zhao's role as the Queen Mother of the West functionally did little to

³² The commentary in the *Quan Tangshi* suggests that this poem should be attributed to literary master Song Zhiwen or Yan Chaoyin, rather than to Zhang Yizhi. See also Cahill 1993, 133.

magnify her political authority and, indeed, might better be understood as a playful, theatrical diversion during her waning years.

Conclusion

On the whole, Wu Zhao's enthusiasm to utilize the Queen Mother of the West for political validation or symbolically as her celestial counterpart was tempered by the fictive kin connection between the House of Tang and Daoist founder Li Er, Laozi. Though she and her political supporters created a series of connections between herself as earthly sovereign and the celestial Daoist deity, it does not appear that she engaged in a consistent or systemic campaign to identify herself as a living incarnation of the Queen Mother. Nonetheless, through her performance of acts and manipulation of symbols already associated with the Queen Mother of the West—sericulture rites, jade tokens of authority, phoenixes, and solar and lunar iconography—Wu Zhao linked herself clearly, if not directly, to the Daoist goddess. These culturally legible symbols, familiar to and understood by her ministers and subjects, identified Wu Zhao with the Queen Mother of the West, amplifying her authority with the mythic and numinous aura of the Daoist divinity. In her final years of rule, surrounded by the flamboyant Zhang brothers, Wu Zhao styled her inner palace a Daoist paradise on earth, over which she presided as Queen Mother of the West. This colorful theater, while it may have served as a welcome distraction from her divided and tumultuous court, did little to augment the fading power of her Zhou dynasty. Nonetheless, the long-standing connections between female emperor Wu Zhao and the Queen Mother of the West illustrate the need to come to terms with the complexity of the interplay of the "three faiths" in Tang China, and re-evaluate the simplistic notion that Wu Zhao supported Buddhism and ignored Daoism in order to separate herself from the Tang and to establish herself as a Buddhist thearch.

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Daoist Imagery of Body and Cosmos

Part 1: Body Gods and Starry Travel

SHIH-SHAN SUSAN HUANG

Abstract

This article presents Daoist visual representations of body and cosmos, drawing extensively on illustrations and diagrams from texts preserved in the Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon. To examine how the Daoist perception of body and cosmos unfolded over time, I discuss images of four types: body gods, imaginary journeys to stars, grotesque spirits and body worms, and the body transformed in internal alchemy—the first two in this part, the next two in JDS 4 (2011).

The current work hopes to contribute to interdisciplinary studies of Chinese art, religion, and science. From the visual perspective, it hopes to add to the ongoing examination of charts or maps (*tu* 圖) and to enrich our understanding of the representation and perception of what “body” means in Chinese visual culture. In terms of Daoist studies, my dominantly visual approach aims to complement the many textual approaches on this topic. This study also adds to the growing scholarship of Daoist art, which has so far focused more on public devotional paintings and statuary and less on private imagery associated with meditation and visualization.

The Invisibility of Daoist Images

Anyone who attempts to trace the history of Daoist imagery in traditional China will probably be frustrated by its relative absence during the early development of religious Daoism from the second to the fifth centuries. Past scholarship relates the apparent lack of interest in image-making to the philosophical definition and fundamental principle of the Dao: “The One, or the center of the universe, the potency responsible for

the creation and continued existence of the world" (Kohn 1992, 109) is mystic, formless, and empty. Therefore, it is aniconic in nature.¹

One gets a sense of the aniconic visuality of Daoist sacred space in the altar diagram preserved in the late six-century *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要 (Essentials of the Supreme Secrets, DZ1138,² 25:189b; see Lagerwey 1987, 30; Little 2000, Fig. 4, 19; Lagerwey 1981) (Fig. 1).

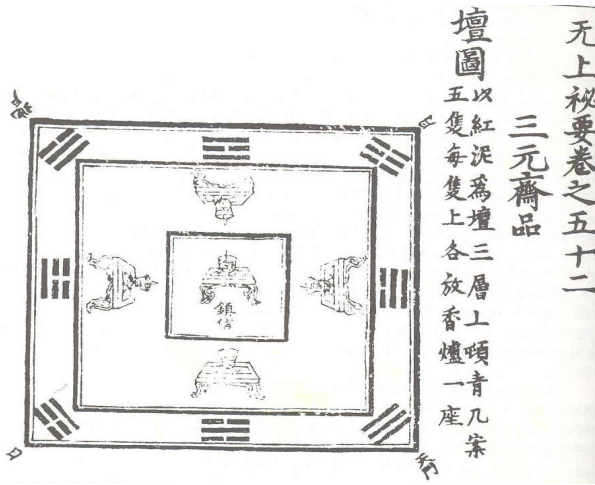


Fig. 1: Altar diagram for the Fast of the Three Primes (DZ 1138, 25:189b).

This shows a bird's-eye view of a square ritual space defined by a three-tiered altar made of vermillion mud. The only objects on display are five sets of incense burners, each placed on a short green table (*qing ji'an* 青几案), juxtaposed with other pledges (*zhenxin* 鎮信), which are marked out but not illustrated on the top tier.

Similarly, only four objects were allowed in an early Daoist oratory (*jingshi* 靜室), according to Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477): an incense burner (*xianglu* 香爐), an incense lamp (*xiangdeng* 香燈), a table of memorials (*zhang'an* 章案) for presenting written petitions to the gods, and a writing knife (*shudao* 書刀) which the gods were intended to use to make

¹ For a recent study of Laozi iconography applying this concept, see Wu 2002. For mysterious looks of Laozi, see Kohn 1996.

² Daoist texts from the *Daozang* are numbered according to Schipper and Verellen 2004 and follow the *Sanjia ben* edition in thirty-six volumes (Beijing: Wenwu, Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, and Tianjin: Guji chubanshe, 1988).

corrections on the petition (*Daomen kelue* 道門科略, DZ 1127, 24:780; Kohn 2003, 108; Schipper 2005, 93).

Lu contrasts the simple Daoist space with those used by people who "followed vulgar customs and had ornate decorations with benches, chairs, images (*xingxiang* 形像), banners and daises" (24:780). Later in the Tang dynasty, the Buddhist monk Falin 法琳 further differentiated Daoist halls from Buddhist by citing Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536), senior Daoist of Mount Mao and Shangqing patriarch, noted for his scripture compilation and his wide knowledge of Daoism, Buddhism, medicine, and pharmacology (see Strickmann 1979). According to Falin, Tao took turns in paying tribute to Buddhism and Daoism, alternating every other day between their respective halls. Among them, "the Buddhist hall had sacred statues while the Daoist one did not" (*Bianzheng lun* 辯正論, T. 52.2110:535a; Chen 1963, 268). Following this idea, most scholars have identified sculptures and votive steles from the fifth to eighth centuries as the earliest Daoist images and understand them as being heavily influenced by the Buddhist tradition of icon-making (Bokenkamp 1996; Abe 1996; Liu 2001; Kohn 2003, 164-68).

While the early construction of Daoist ritual space was devoid of iconic displays, images of body and cosmos as part of mystic inner visions were central in Daoist meditation from an early age, especially in the Shangqing tradition. Often referred to as *cunsi* 存思, this practice means "keeping (something in mind) and contemplating (it)," in other words actualizing or visualizing an internal object. Daoism thus made use of images in "the intermediary world" of visual meditation to "transform psychic contents," thereby to establish a perception of a new spiritual body (Robinet 1989, 159-60; 1993, 48-54; Kohn 2009a, 6-9).³

Primary sources addressing Daoist meditative images tend to deal dominantly with the "individual mystical search for transcendence," as opposed to works that focus on "the worship of the deities, saints, and

³ Buddhist visualizations in medieval China relate to the Pure Land associated with the Buddha Amitābha (Amituo fo 阿彌陀佛). The *Foshuo guan Wuliang-shou fo jing* 佛說觀無量壽佛經 (Visualization Sutra, T.12.365) offers detailed instructions for the Sixteen Visualizations (*Shiliu guan* 十六觀); see Ryūkoku 2004, xiv-xvii. In the Tang and Song, the Sixteen Visualizations inspired many art works. See Dunhuang yanjiusuo 1999-, 5:100-7, 141, 145, 149, 157, .177, 181, 193-4, 201, 214, 235, 237.

ancestors.”⁴ Furthermore, images intended for visualization practice survive mostly as illustrations in Daoist texts known as “illustrated instructions” (*tujue* 圖訣) as well as in meditation texts that have “pictures for visualization” (*cunsi tu* 存思圖) in their titles. Most early Daoist images, it seems moreover, appeared in texts not in for general circulation but only accessible to selected adepts.⁵ It is, therefore, quite possible that the under-representation or “invisibility” of such images in modern scholarship results from the privacy and selectivity of their intended audience. Early adepts who applied these images were advised to meditate on them in solitude without anyone knowing about them.

Daoist adepts perceived the world of intermediary images as a microcosm within their own bodies, analogous to the time and space of the cosmic world. This concept is first found in the ancient Chinese school of yin-yang cosmology and the five phases, as outlined in the *Liji* (Book of Rites 禮記) and the *Yijing* (Book of Changes 易經). Because the same name designating a point within the human body often simultaneously refers to a celestial place, the adept’s mental visitation of these realms through ecstatic travel within his own body symbolizes his roaming in the corresponding heavenly spheres. Such visual meditation and active imagination accordingly served to turn the adept’s body into a cosmic body, a “theater of moving gods” (Robinet 1993, 52).

Daoist images of body and cosmos reveal the human body as a sacred site that myriads of deities travel to and fro, matching the divinities of the cosmos active in the course of Daoist ritual, although they remain invisible to the observing audience in the sacred space of Dao (*daochang* 道場). This holds true whether the images appear as scrolls in a temple or a private chamber, as textual illustrations, or as verbal outlines.

By the Song dynasty (960-1279), visualization continued as a mainstay even in newly-codified rituals,⁶ then further developed in internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), which can be described as an innovative devel-

⁴ These two aspects have formed the essential categories of Daoist textual tradition since the fifth century; see Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 16.

⁵ For an overview of *Daozang* “texts in general circulation” vs. “texts in internal circulation,” see Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1347-92.

⁶ A type of internal or private ritual, visual meditation was conducted individually by Daoist adepts and was deemed superior to external or public forms. See the recent study of internal alchemy in the thunder rites (Chao 2009).

opment of breathing and meditative practice, or "a form of subtle body ecstasy," aiming to nourish life and attain immortality (Baldrian-Hussein 1990; Kohn 1993, 313-319; Robinet 1997, 212-56; Pregadio 2006; Kohn and Wang 2009; Kohn 2009b, 114). Here a new type of body imagery emerges whose physiological features find common ground with the body imagery used in medicine. All in all, the images provide a great resource for a better understanding of the visual culture of Chinese mysticism, demonology, disease, and medicine (Kohn 1992, 2009b; Despeux 1994, 2005, 2007; Mollier 2006).

Early Body Gods

Body gods (*shenshen* 身神) are divine entities believed to reside in various parts of the body, ranging from major centers such as head, eyes, and navel, to the five inner organs (*wuzang* 五臟), including heart, spleen, and kidneys. While body gods can and do travel in and out of the body, their prolonged exit may result in sickness or death. Hence, visualizing them and their associated body parts in detailed physicality is powerful means of keeping them in place and thus promoting health and longevity (Robinet 1993, 64-65).

Literary sources of body god visualization predate visual documentation. One of the earliest Daoist scriptures on the subject is the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Scripture of the Great Peace, ed. Wang 1960).⁷ Dated in its earliest surviving layers to the second century, the text advocates the use of painted images of body gods as aids to meditation, which will prevent sickness if done efficiently. Their images should be painted in full color and displayed in an empty and sunlit meditation room. The adept should face the painting in solitude and visualize the body gods appropriately (Lin 1993, 236-238; 2009; Hendrischke 2006).

It further describes the "Method of Hanging Images to Call Back the [Body] Gods" (*Xuanxiang huanshen fa* 懸像還神法):

⁷ For *Taiping jing* studies, see Lin 2009, 219-20; Hendrischke 2006. The text was transmitted in multiple versions and re-edited in the third and sixth centuries. See Li 1994. Its circulation in the tenth to thirteenth centuries is documented in various sources, e.g., YJQQ 6:98, 6:104; 7:12; 11:223; 12:277; 49:1087, 119:2628; *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, "Jingshi tushu gangmu 經史圖書綱目" 44a; *Songshi* 宋史 158:15a.

The Method of Hanging Images to Call Back the Spirits: The spirits live inside the body. There are ten spirits of spring that look like boys dressed in blue; ten spirits of summer looking like boys dressed in red; ten spirits of fall that appear like boys dressed in white; ten spirits of winter that look like boys dressed in black; twelve spirits of the four seasons that seem to be boys dressed in yellow.

These are the gods residing in the inner organs of male adepts. The same numbers of gods [in female form] reside in those of a female. Males best meditate on [the gods] in male form, while females envision them in female form. Each should be [painted] about one foot [*chi*] tall. [If] the images are nicely painted and lovable, adepts will feel happy and their spirit souls promptly return to the body. (Wang 1960, 21-22)

Elsewhere in the same text, the “Method of Fasting and Meditating on the Spirits in Order to Rescue Oneself from Death” (*Zhaijie sishen jiushi jue* 齋戒思神救死訣) advises adepts to use painted images of the body gods of the five organs and other corresponding cosmic divinities as visual aids for meditation to attain eternal life (Wang 1960, 292-93). Depicted on plain silk, these deities wear robes whose colors correspond to the colors of the five phases. Their corresponding cosmic divinities appear as twenty-five anthropomorphic gods mounted on celestial steeds, divided into five groups matching the five directions (1960, 293). They wear bonnet-caps and are equipped with a variety of weapons including arrows, cross-bows, axes, gilded shields, and swords (1960, 299).

In addition to the *Taiping jing*, the *Laozi zhongjing* 老子中經 (Central Scripture of Laozi, DZ 1168, 27:141-56; *Yunqi qiqian* 雲笈七籤 18-19 [hereafter YJQQ]; P. 3784) is an early Daoist text describing internal gods (Schipper 1993, 108-12; 1995; Katō 1996; 2002, 68-70; Neswald 2009, 30-33). Dating from the early middle ages, the text transports sacred geography and corresponding divinities to the human body. Schipper suggests that the text may have been accompanied by pictures, possibly “purely abstract” because they were “meant to be meditation and visualization props” (2005, 95).

The body gods here are perceived not only as cosmic divinities but also as officers in a celestial administration mirroring Eastern Han society. Certain gods are given full-length introductions, which often include biographical details such as surname, name, cognomen, birthplace,

physical appearance, dress, body size, and residence in the body (YJQQ 18-19). This bodily pantheon is further supported by eighteen thousand attendant officers.

For example, the highest-ranking deity is the Most High Great One (Shangshang taiyi 上上太一), hovering above the head. He appears to have a human head and a bird's body. Next is the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母), traditionally associated with the center of the world on Mt. Kunlun 崑崙, but here assigned to the right eye and paired with the Lord King of the East (Dongwang gong 東王公), who governs the left eye. In addition, there is the Jade Maiden of Great Yin of Obscure Brilliance (Taiyin xuanguang yunu 太陰玄光玉女) who lives in the spleen, also called the Palace of Great Simplicity (Taisu gong 太素宮). Her husband is the Lord of the Dao (Daojun 道君) – another manifestation of the Great One who lives in the gallbladder, called the Purple Chamber (*Zifang* 紫房), and is served by Lord Lao (Laojun 老君), who holds the magical mushroom and a green banner. Their child is the Perfected Cinnabar Child (Zhenren Zidan 真人子丹), who is seated on a bed of precious pearls at the entrance to the stomach, or the Great Storehouse (Taicang 太倉), where all the gods eat and drink.

If adepts follow the text's instructions and visualize the gods for nine years, the Great Deity of the Celestial Master (Tianshi dashen 天師大神) will send another eighteen thousand officers into the adept's body for divine protection. Together with the existing gods, they will travel in chariots driven by blue dragons, white deer, galloping horses, divine turtles, and carp and work together to "lift the adept's body to ascend to heaven" (18:433).

Among the many dwellings of the body gods, the abdomen is perhaps the most scenic site containing a variety of waterways and mountains. It is also the place where the myriad gods flock together. The Jade Maidens of the Six Ding (Liuding yunu 六丁玉女), for example, are a group of female officials who guard the kidneys and are in charge of merit evaluation (18:423).⁸ They routinely leave for excursions in the

⁸ These female deities are the personifications of the six combinations of the celestial stem *ding* with terrestrial branches in the sexagenary cycle. See Andersen 1989-90, 34; Mugitani in Pregadio 2007, 695-97. For a "Picture of the Jade Maidens of the Six Yin," see YJQQ 80:1835.

Great Ocean, located between the kidneys; they also ride on divine carp and turtles whose golden-yellow shells bear magical writs. They breathe the original breath of the essence of pure yin energy (18:423, 429-30, 434; 19:449). In addition to the kidney goddesses, the Wind Lord (Fengbo 風伯) and the Rain Master (Yushi 雨師) also roam the Great Ocean (18:430), associated with a site near the navel and the small intestines, respectively (18:425).

In the depth of the Ocean, about three inches (*cun* 寸) beneath the navel and adjacent to the spine near the kidneys, one reaches the most important area of the inner body: the Cinnabar or Elixir Field (*dantian* 丹田). This is identified as “the root of the human being,” or the “Palace That Contains Essence” (*Cangjing gong* 藏精宮). It is where men store semen and women menstrual blood (18:428-429; Schipper 1993, 106).

The body god residing in the Cinnabar Field is a nine-millimeter (*fen* 分)-tall baby boy dressed in red and emerging from the red *qi* (YJQQ 19: 441). This child metaphor also plays a pivotal role in the visualization of body gods in the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Yellow Court Scripture), one of the oldest Daoist texts central to the Shangqing school.⁹

Planets and Bureaucrats

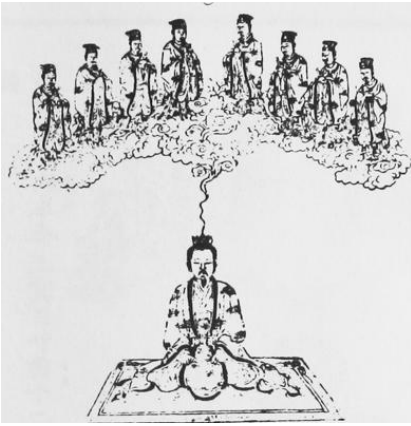
Another important Shangqing document on visualization is the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (Perfect Scripture of the Great Cavern, DZ 6), collated by the Southern Song Shangqing patriarch Jiang Zongying 蔣宗瑛 (d. 1281) on Maoshan (Robinet 1983; 1993, 97-117). Composed of stanzas, the scripture is meant to be recited while the adept visualizes body gods and cosmic divinities (Robinet 1993, 104). It emphasizes the relationship between the divinities residing in the body and the heavenly sphere, encouraging adepts to embark on ecstatic journeys: soaring into the sky, absorbing the cosmic energies, and integrating with the Dao.

By concentrating their mind, meditating, and breathing consciously, adepts can visualize their saliva condensing into various forms of body gods. The gods descend from the head toward the “gates of death,”

⁹ The text divides into an “inner” classic: the *Huangting waijing yujing* 黃庭外景玉經 (DZ 332) and an outer one, the *Huangting neijing yujing* 黃庭內景玉經 (DZ 331; YJQQ 11-12). For studies, see Schipper 1975; Kroll 1996; Robinet 1993, 55-96; Kohn 1993, 181-188; Baldrian-Hussein 2004.

which are "precise points in the body through which a fatal breath can be inhaled," such as the nipples, the ears, the inner organs, the bladder, and the feet (Robinet 1997, 133). By navigating the body in this manner, the gods "close up the bodily orifices to make it into a hermetically sealed world" (Robinet 1993, 103).

Most of the fifty illustrations in the text share a common image of a seated adept shown frontally or with his back to the viewer while visualizing a group of body gods floating on a cloud mass emanating from his head (Fig. 2a-d). A major category among them are planetary divinities from Venus, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Sun and the Moon.¹⁰ Shown as officials holding a tablet in both hands before their chest (Fig. 2a),¹¹ they may also appear as kingly figures wearing imperial robes and caps decorated with pendants (Fig. 2b). Other illustrated body gods tend to be military in nature, including guardians (*lishi* 力士) (Fig. 2c) and divine generals wearing armor and holding weapons (Fig. 2d).¹² Their dress varies in style and color according to their rank and body location.



a.



b.

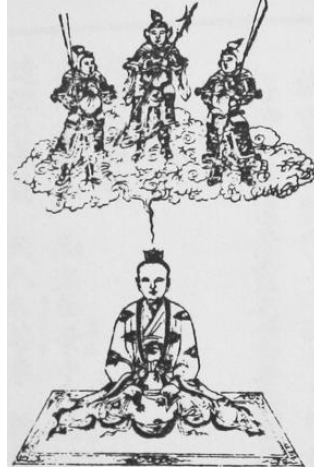
¹⁰ The numbers of planetary deities from each star also vary. Jupiter has nine, Mars eight, Venus seven, Mercury five, and Saturn twelve (DZ 6, 1:516-18).

¹¹ More illustrations are found in DZ 6, 1:516-18, 521, 524, 527-29, 543.

¹² One particular trinity consists of a general "who resembles the Great General of Heavenly Mugwort (*Tianpeng dajiang* 天蓬大將)" (DZ 6, 1:520a).



c.



d.

Fig. 2: a. Eight Deities of Mars (DZ 6, 1:517a); b. Twelve Deities of Saturn (1:518a); c. Six Guardians (1:539c); d. Divine Generals with Weapons (1:537a).

All these various illustrations share a common compositional structure, featuring a seated adept with body gods standing on clouds emanating from his head. This pictorial scheme becomes standard in later Daoist visualization pictures, as reflected, for example, in an illustration from the seventeenth-century *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨, ZW 314 (Fig. 2e).



Fig. 2e: Visualization picture from the *Xingming guizhi*, British Library edition.

The pictorial conventions of deities emanating from the head as illustrated in the *Dadong zhenjing* are comparable to pictorial motifs from Buddhist visualization paintings, such as the Southern Song painting of Amida's paradise in the Chion-in 知恩院 collection, Kyoto (Fig. 3) (Nara Museum 1996, Figs. 142, 138; 2009, Figs. 57, 64).

In this painting, the Pure Land is symbolized by a lotus pond with the newly reborn seated on lotus blossoms and heavenly birds floating about the jeweled terrace. Amida Buddha stands at the center. Emanating from his head is an assembly of two groups of buddhas and bodhi-sattvas. Based on the visual comparison, it is possible that the printed illustrations of the *Dadong zhenjing*, carved in the Ming dynasty, are based on prototypes of the Southern Song when Jiang Zongying compiled the text.



Fig. 3: *Amida's Pure Land*. Southern Song dynasty. 1180. Color and ink on silk. Chion-in collection, Kyoto (Nara Museum 2009, Figs. 57, 64).

Most early sources have the tendency to picture higher Daoist divinities in bureaucratic attire. The Six Dynasties work *Jiebao shier jiejie tujue* 解胞十二結節圖訣 (Illustrated Instructions for How to Untie the Twelve Embryonic Knots, DZ 1384), serves as a good example (Fig. 4)

(34:98a).¹³ The text advises adepts to visualize the assembly of body gods in order to “untie” (*jie* 解) the “inborn knots” (*jie* 結) hindering the flow of *qi* in the body and causing illness.¹⁴ It shows the body gods one by one, depicting them as generic bureaucrats in long robes with long sleeves and ceremonial caps. Some deities hold a tablet with both hands; others simply cup their hands near their waists.



Fig. 4: Images of the body gods of the inborn knots (DZ 1384, 34:98a).

A colophon accompanying each image identifies the deity's title, styles, and color of garments. Picturing gods as officials is also the norm among devotional images in Daoist temples, such as the fourteenth-century mural in the Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Temple of the Eternal Joy), a Quanzhen 全真 sanctuary in southern Shanxi (Fig. 5) (Xiao 2008, 115).

¹³ Not included in early canons, this was probably added from a Song source. See Schipper and Verellen 2004, 32.

¹⁴ These “inborn knots” formed in the body at birth. See *Jiebao shier jiejie tu-jue*, DZ 1384, 34:96; Robinet 1993, 139-43; Katō 2002, 74-88.



Fig. 5: Daoist mural from the Sanqing Hall, Yongle gong. 14th century. Yuan dynasty. Shanxi province (Xiao 2008, 115).

Ritual Activation

The visualization of body gods also plays an important role in Daoist rites. The officiant enters a state of deep meditation in order to summon the divinities from his body—part of an opening rite which also involves “Lighting the Burner” (*Falu* 發爐) and “Calling Forth the Officers” (*Chuguan* 出官) (Asano 2002, 170-71; Davis 2001, 307-08; Andersen in Pregadio 2007, 400-41).¹⁵

¹⁵ This connection of visualization and ritual is documented in several lost scriptures listed in the fifteenth-century *Daozang quejing mulu* 道藏闕經目錄 (Catalogue of Missing Scriptures of the Daoist Canon, DZ 1430). Two such texts on “Pictures of Calling Forth the Officials” (*Chuguan tu* 出官圖) and “Pictures of Meditating on the Officers” (*Gongcao sishen tu* 功曹出官圖) have the heading *Zhengyi* 正一 (Orthodox Unity), referring to the Daoism of the Celestial Masters school. They may have been visual aids for masters in calling forth his body gods in ritual. Other texts with the prefix “*Zhengyi fawen*” 正一法文 are related to Meng Anpai 孟安排 (fl. 699). See YJQQ 6.18a; Schipper and Verellen 2004, 467.

The twelfth-century *Yutang dafa* 玉堂大法 (Great Rites of the Jade Hall, DZ 220), compiled by the Tianxin 天心 (Celestial Heart) Daoist master Lu Shizhong 路時中, depicts relevant ritual body gods (Fig. 6a-d)



a. Master Officer; b. Jade Maiden; c. Officer; d. Heavenly Clerics (DZ 220, 4:74c-75b)

(Boltz 1987, 33-38; Hymes 2002; Andersen in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1070-73; Andersen in Pregadio 2007, 715-16; Davis 2001, 56-57). They are shown as stereotypical Master Officials (Fig. 6a), Jade Maidens (Fig. 6b), Officers (Fig. 6c), and Heavenly Clerics (Fig. 6d).

A series of dynamic illustrations from a Tang visualization manual offer alternative representations of the body gods called out by the adept (Fig. 7a-b)(*Da cunsi tu zhujue* 大存思圖注訣, Secret Instructions and Illustrations of the Great Visualizations, DZ 875; YJQQ 43:953-56, 963-66; see Lagerwey in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 498).

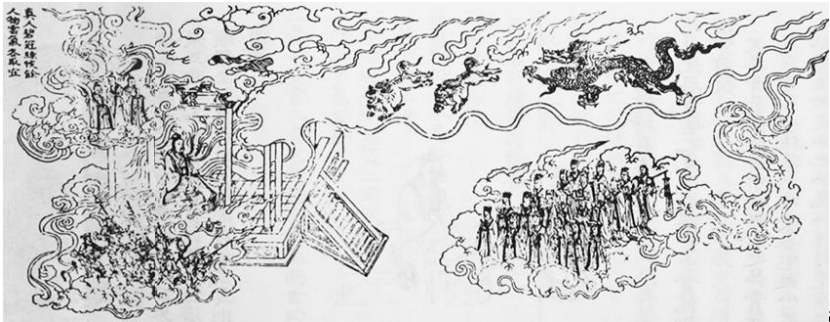




Fig. 7: a. Visualization of the soldiers and horses on clouds while the adept walks in ritual; b. Visualization of the body guards while ascending to the rostrum to preach (DZ 875, 18:720c-21a; 18:722a-b).

The text offers instruction on how to practice visualization at different times and for different purposes. Each section ends with a phrase that reads "the image is [illustrated] as such at the left" (*qixiang ruzuo* 其形如左). In the *Daozang* version, this phrase is followed by Fig. 7a. A note on the upper left of an illustration concerns color: "The perfected being [adept] should wear the bluish green cap and green garments, and the rest of the figures and clouds can be drawn as [the illustrator] sees fit" (18:721a).

This image shows the swift arrival of officials, generals, and heavenly animals on clusters of clouds surrounding an adept, who meditates in a seated position inside a pavilion (18:720c-21a). This illustrates how an adept should "visualize the soldiers and horses on clouds while the adept walks [in ritual]." The accompanying text refers to these mobile deities as the celestial boys, jade maidens, heavenly deities, earth deities, sun and moon, stars, Five Emperors and nine billion riders coming out of the adept's organs (18:719c-20b).

Fig. 7b, next, depicts the body guards manifesting themselves in front of the adepts as warriors on horses, and floating on tapering clouds. This illustrates how to "visualize the body guards while ascending to the rostrum [to preach]." Based on this, it is likely that a Southern Song ritual master would visualize images like these in his mind while summoning his body gods in ritual. Compared to the gods depicted in *Dadong zhenjing* (see Figs. 2a-d above), whose content veers toward self-cul-

tivation and meditation, the depictions in this text present a larger and more dynamic assembly of body gods.

Journeys to the Dipper

A rather different type of imagery in Daoist materials features the adepts' imaginary journeys to the stars, visualizations which enable them to "integrate self and Dao, body and cosmos on a higher level" (Robinet 1989; Kohn 1992, 96-116; 1993, 257).

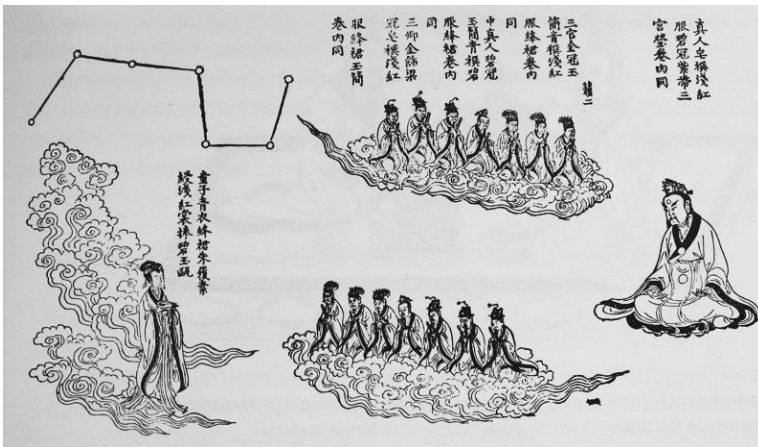


Fig. 8: Imaginary Journey to the First Star of the Dipper in the Spring (DZ 765, 17:219a).

A prime example appears in the *Wudou sanyi tujue* 五斗三一圖訣 (Illustrated Instructions of Visualizing the Three Ones in the Five Phases of the Dipper, DZ 765) (Fig. 8), a Shangqing document of the Six Dynasties which focuses on the adept's ecstatic journey to and beyond the Dipper at the Eight Nodes of the year, i. e., at the beginning of the four seasons plus the solstices and equinoxes.

The example shown here depicts the springtime journey to the first star of the Dipper, Yang Brightness. The adept is seated at the right of the picture plane, facing the Dipper at the upper left. The Dipper is represented as a graphic configuration of seven dots lined up like a scoop

with a handle (Kohn 1993, 213).¹⁶ A young lady standing below the Dipper may represent the celestial attendant of the first star. Between the adept and the Dipper are two groups of seven seated figures, moving in opposite directions. The grouping of seven echoes the seven visible stars of the Dipper.¹⁷ In each group, the figures wear bureaucratic robes and hold audience tablets, while moving along on tapering clouds.

The explanatory notes above the illustration designate the adept at the center as a "perfected" (*zhenren* 真人) with garb different from that of the others (17:218a). The group at the bottom ascending to the Dipper represent the adept; they are the body gods called the Three Ones (*Sanyi* 三一) as well as other internal divinities (Robinet 1993, 124-127; Kohn 1989; 2007). The group on top descending from the Dipper may indicate the adept's journey back to earth.

From the perspective of visual study, the explanatory notes provide valuable information. Like materials in similar documents (Figs. 7a, 13), they function as coloring guidelines for illustrators. One may even infer that the original illustrations were hand-colored drawings—the dominant form of religious illustrations produced before the age of printing (Drège 1999).

The Dipper occupies a significant place in Chinese visual culture even beyond religion. In the Han dynasty, it appears in pictorial art as a series of seven dots joined by straight lines forming the shape of a scoop or mimicking the imperial chariot, such as in the rubbing retrieved from the Wu Family Shrine (Tseng 2001, 173, 226) (Fig. 9).¹⁸

¹⁶ Cf. *Tianguan santu jing* 天關三圖經 (DZ 1366, 33:808b-18c); Robinet 1989, 178; Kohn 1993, 257-67. Scholars have suggested that the *Tianguan santu jing* was added to the *Daozang* from a Song canon; see Schipper and Verellen 2004, 32.

¹⁷ The Dipper consists of seven visible stars and two invisible ones. For a diagram, see Kohn 1993, 213.

¹⁸ For associations of the Dipper with the imperial chariot in Tang and Song sources, see Yu Shinan 虞世南 (588-638), *Beitang shuchao* 北堂詩鈔 150:7b; *Taiping yulan* 7:3b; Su Song 蘇頌 (1020-1101), *Xin yixiang fayao* 新儀像法要, 28; Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296), *Yuhai* 玉海 1: 2a. On Daoist stars, see Schafer 1977.

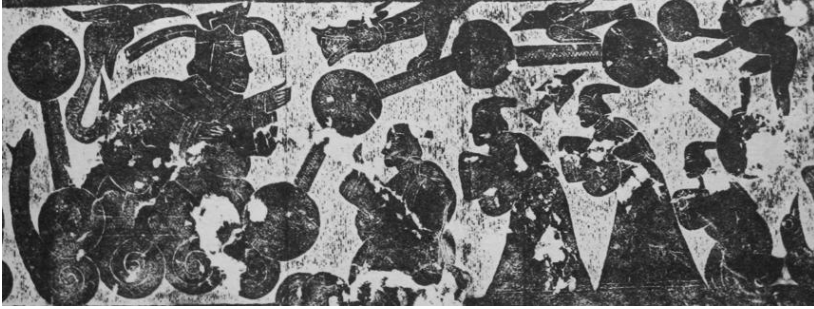


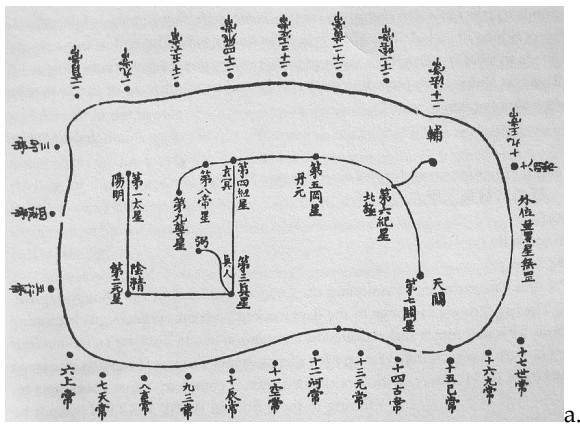
Fig. 9: Rubbing of a King Riding on a Chariot in the Shape of the Dipper. Wu Liang Shrine, Shandong. Han dynasty (*Zhongguo gudai tianwen wenwu tuji*, 51).

A tenth-century drawing in a Dunhuang calendar dated from 924 (S. 2404) similarly depicts an intriguing scene called the “Method of Sir Immortal Ge for Honoring the Great Dipper” (Fig. 10; see Mollier 2008, 149-152, Fig. 4.3). The official-looking Immortal Ge, i.e., Ge Xuan 葛玄 (see Bokenkamp in Pregadio 2007, 444-45), kneels in front of two celestial figures landing on a mattress under the scoop-like Dipper diagram. The god of the Dipper wears kingly robes and a cap, holding a tablet in his hands. A female attendant stands behind him. The text below indicates that the scene takes place at night (Mollier 2008, 141-42, 149)



Fig. 10: Ge Xiangong Worshipping the Dipper (S. 2404).

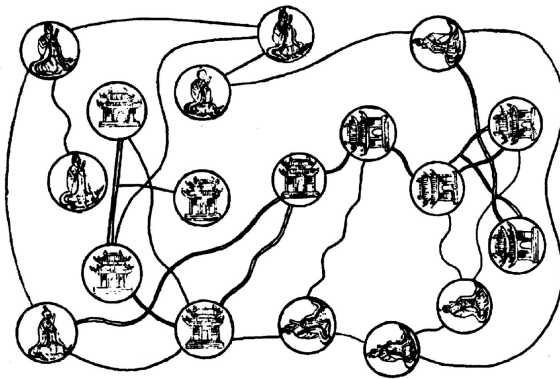
Because of its symbolic role as *axis mundi* and its position as the bridge between the sun and the moon, the Dipper has played an important role in medieval Daoist ritual performance and visualization (Kohn 1992, 110, 114; Mollier 2008, 134-73).¹⁹ As Poul Andersen notes, the Daoist ritual dances of "walking along the guideline and treading on the stars of the Dipper" (*bugang tadou* 步罡踏斗) can be traced back to the early Six Dynasties (1990; in Pregadio 2007, 237). Pertinent to the ritual dance mimicking the Dipper is a choreographic diagram employed in a visualization practice called "Method of Pacing the Kongchang" (*Bu Kongchang zhidao* 步空常之道) (Fig. 11a) (*Wuxing qi yuan kong chang jue* 五星七元空常訣, DZ 876, 18:725a-b).²⁰ In addition to the seven visible stars, this diagram marks the two invisible ones: the Imperial Star (Dixing 帝星, or Fu 輔) and the Honorable Star (Zunxing 尊星 or Bi 弼) within the scoop (Robinet 1989, 172-73). If adepts can see these stars, they may live for hundreds of years, as many as 300 or even 600 (YJQQ 24:547-48; 25:563).



a.

¹⁹ Already the *Laozi zhongjing* notes that the Dipper resides in the head, thorax, and abdomen of the inner body; see Schipper 1993, 108.

²⁰ *Kongchang* 空常 refers to the invisible stars; see Robinet in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 172. For Song samples of ritual dance diagrams preserved in early Tianxin texts, see *Zhuguo jiumin zongzhen biyao* 助國救民總真祕要 (DZ 1227, [dat. 1116], 32: 103c, 104b, 105c). See Andersen in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1060.



b.

Fig. 11: a. Choreography for the Dance of the Dipper (DZ 876, 18:725ab); b. The Nine Palaces of the Perfected of the Nine Heavens (DZ 1396, 34:245a).

The virtual experience of pacing the void and traversing stars is also echoed in a Tang meditative star map found in the *Hetu baolu* 河圖寶籙 (Precious Register of the River Chart, DZ 1396, 34:245a; Mollier 2008, 166, 170, Fig. 4.11; Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 602-03) (Fig. 11b). It shows both the nine “palaces” of the stellar deities as well as their nine male gods, each wearing a top knot and holding a tablet.²¹ These are circled stations connected by meandering lines, which indicate the celestial pathways adepts visualize.

²¹ The convention of representing the nine star gods and their palaces in circles is also prominent in two other Tang text: *Zhengyi mengwei falu* 正一盟威法籙, DZ 791, 28:478a; *Qusu jueci lu* 曲素訣辭籙, DZ 1392, 34:174c-75b (Mollier 2008, 168-69, Fig. 4.10).

Stellar Imagery in the Body

The tradition has continued unbroken into late imperial and modern Daoism. The thirteenth-century *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (Great Rites of Highest Clarity and Numinous Treasure, DZ 1221) contains a diagram used in ritual visualizations that shows the Nine Palaces (*jiugong* 九宮) lined up in the adept's head (Fig. 12), which in turn floats on a mass of cloud (Esposito in Pregadio 2007, 775-77).²²



Fig. 12
Illustration of the Nine Palaces visualized in a Daoist's head (DZ1221, 30:673a).

This inner vision of the Nine Palaces recalls the Picture of the Nine Palaces (*Jiugong zifang tu* 九宮紫房圖; DZ 156) circulated in the Tang-to-Northern Song period (Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 612), shown here in a sectional view (Fig. 13). The YJQQ praises the power of this picture for enabling adepts to visualize and "reach the celestial deities" (80:1833). The picture is laid out horizontally and, like a handscroll, is viewed to be from right to left. Here, as also in the *Da cunsi tu zhujue* (Fig. 7a) and the *Wudou sanyi tujue* (Fig. 8), the illustrations are accompanied by short notes to make their content clear. They signify the process

²²This is similar to the torso image in the *Jinshu yuzi shangjing*, DZ 879, 18:743c-44a; Mollier 2008, Fig. 4.8, 164. Neswald has identified the Nine Palaces in the head as mentioned in the *Huangting jing* with the corresponding points of Mt. Kunlun, the celestial dwelling of Queen Mother of the West (2009, 30).

of visualization and clarify the connection between body and cosmos. On the right, the adept's torso appears first in profile, then frontal—showing his concentration on the Nine Palaces in his head. Two large towers following the torso images serve as elaborations of the Nine Palaces illustrated in the previous two torsos. Following the two tower motifs are a series of visualizations comparable to Fig. 8.



Fig. 13 : Visualization Picture of the Purple Chamber and the Nine Palaces. Detail. *Shangqing dongzhen jiugong zifang tu*, DZ 156, 3: 128b.

A forerunner of this technique is the “Method of Reclining in the Dipper” (*wodou fa* 臥斗法), first recorded in the fourth-century *Jinshu yuzi shangjing* 金書玉字上經 (Golden Book with Jade Characters, DZ 879, 18:743c-44a). Here the adept should lie on a mat, covered with the graphic patterns of the Dipper (Robinet 1993, 207). The reclining method helps him “see the essence of the nine stars fusing and transforming into a divinity, sitting in a chariot” and illuminate his entire inner body (Mollier 2008, 163). The accompanying diagram shows a child under the constellation (Fig. 14) (Mollier 2008, 164, Fig. 4.8). His feet point to the eight and ninth stars, while his hands touch the second and fourth stars.

In the Southern Song, the same practice is associated with the Tianxin tradition as found in the *Yutang zhengzong gaoben neijing yushu* 玉堂正宗高奔內景玉書 (Jade Text of Flying High in the Inner Landscape

from the Correct Tradition, DZ 221, 4:133b-34c; Robinet 1993, 208; Mollier 2008, 163-164) (Fig. 15).²³

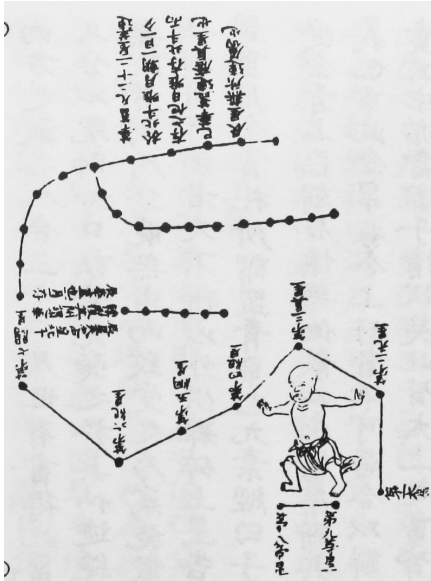


Fig. 14: Diagram of the Dipper and the Twenty-eight Lodgings (DZ 879, 18:743c).

Matching the swift flight of the stars from the sky to the adept's mouth, these illustrations (Fig. 15) depict the adept's magical absorption of the Dipper. The seven stars illuminate all his organs as well as his eyes. Six of the images feature an imaginary torso with a head attached to the related organ. For example, the sixth image (Fig. 15f), showing a relationship between the sixth star and the kidneys, consists of a head-spinal-cord body chart with the kidneys highlighted in the lower body.

²³ For a similar description of the "Reclining in the Dipper" (Wodou 臥斗) and the original layout of the illustrations, see *Yutang zhengzong gaoben neijing yushu*, DZ 221, 4:132a-34c.

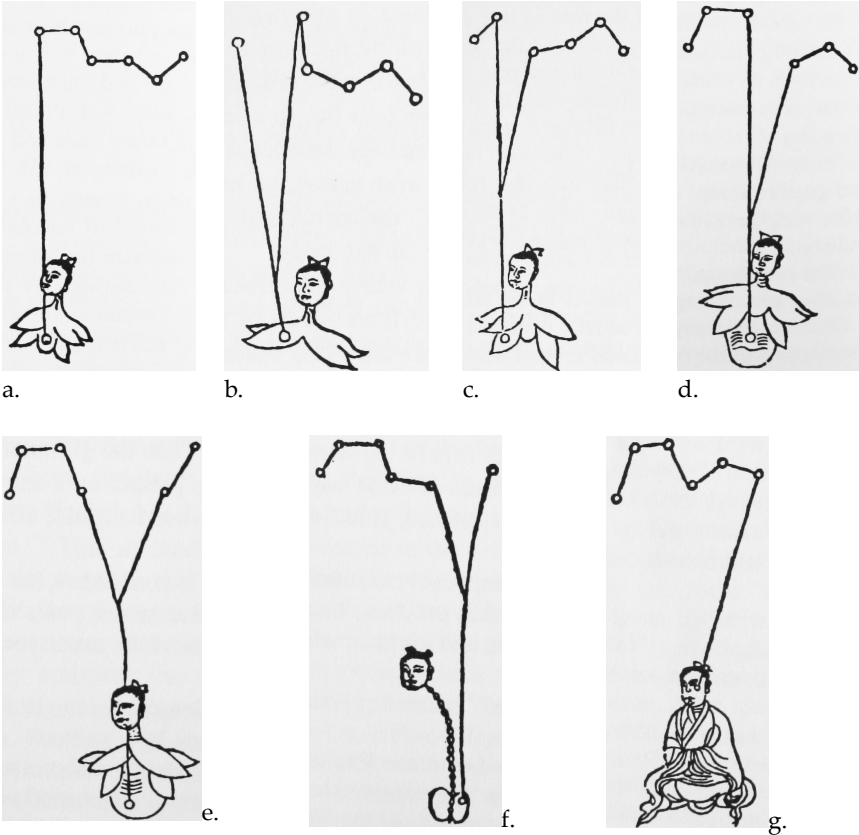


Fig. 15: The Descent of the Seven Stars of the Dipper into the Bodily Organs (DZ 221, 4:129b-30b). a. the first Star in the heart; b. the second Star in the lungs; c. the third Star in the liver; d. the fourth Star in the spleen; e. the fifth Star in the stomach; f. the sixth Star in the kidneys; g. the seventh Star in the eyes.

The Iconic Form of the Dipper

Elsewhere in the text, the Dipper is personified as nine sacred figures (Fig. 16a) (4:129b-30b). Seven are depicted as long-haired male deities in long robes, holding a tablet with both hands in front of the chest.²⁴ The other two, following the seven, are depicted as imperial figures wearing royal caps with pendants and holding tablets in both hands. This echoes the concept of the Imperial Stars noted in the accompanying text (4:130b), which identify these two figures as the invisible eighth and ninth stars.

Similar iconographies of the nine star deities of the Dipper are illustrated in other Daoist texts dating to the thirteenth century (Fig. 16b-c) (DZ 220, 4:10a-11a; *Beidou benming yansheng zhenjing zhujie* 北斗本命延生真經註解, DZ 751, 17:53a-54b; Mollier 2008, Fig. 4.5, 157). This iconography seems to be shared by Buddhism as well. The images of the seven star deities seen in the aforementioned Daoist texts compare closely to those in the Yuan-dynasty (1279-1368) Buddhist scripture *Foshuo beidou qixing yanming jing* 佛說北斗七星延命經 (Sutra of the Great Dipper) (Fig. 16d) (T. 21.1307; see Mollier 2008, 136-140, especially Fig. 4.1, 139).



a.

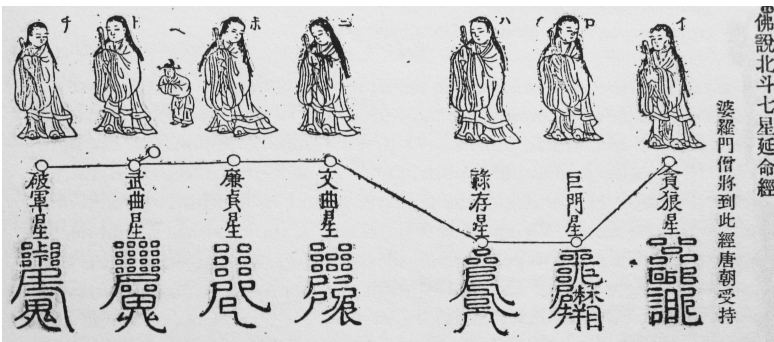


b.

²⁴ Cf. the iconography of these seven star deities in the forms of perfected beings who "wear jewelry crowns and colorful shawls and hold jade tablets in hands" in YJQQ 25:563.



c.



d.

Fig. 16: The Divinities of the Dipper—a. DZ 221, 4:129b-130b; b. DZ 220, 4:10a-11a; c. DZ 751, 17:53a-54b; d. T. 21.1307.

An anonymous Southern Song painting from the Japanese Hōgonji 宝厳寺 collection depicts the star deities of the Dipper similarly to those seen in the aforementioned religious texts (Fig. 17) (Ide 2001, pl. 14; Nara Museum 2009, 172: Fig. 121). On a background mimicking the sky at night, the star deities descend on clouds in a group formation recalling the scoop-shaped Dipper.²⁵

²⁵ I would like to thank David Brody for his input on the Hōgonji composition. For an innovative interpretation of a Song copy of a Tang court painting whose composition echoes the diagram of the Dipper, see the Northern Song *Copy of Zhang Xuan's Lady Guoguo on an Outing* (Fang Zhang Xuan Guoguo furen youchun tu 仿張萱虢國夫人遊春圖) in Miao 2006, Fig. 2 (no page no.), 34.



Fig.17: Deities of the Dipper. Southern Song. Thirteenth century (?). Ink, color and gold on silk. 112.5x54.1 cm. Hōgonji Temple, Shiga, Japan (Nara Museum 2009, 172: Fig. 121).

The seven long-haired deities are dressed in white, collars and upper sleeves decorated with exquisite golden patterns. The redness of their shoes contrasts with their white clothes and the dark background. Following these seven deities are two attendants depicted as officials wearing ceremonial robes, multi-colored in red, black, white, and gold. Their dress resembles that from a thirteenth-century Daoist text shown in Fig. 16c. In the foreground are two female deities holding swords.

Accompanying colophons written in small golden characters identify them as messengers serving the Dipper: Qingyang 擎羊 on the right and Tuoluoni 陀羅尼 on the left. The fourteenth-century Qingwei 清微 (Pure Tenuity) texts associated with the ritual summoning of the gods first make reference to these two deities (*Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元, DZ 1220, 28:820b, 29:15c. *Xuanshu zougao yi* 玄樞奏告儀, DZ 218, 3:611c; see Skar in Pregadio 2007, 804-5).²⁶

The Hōgonji painting probably was used in a ritual for summoning the star gods,²⁷ as is suggested by a diagram in the thirteenth-century liturgical manual *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* 靈寶領教濟度金書 (Golden Book of Salvation according to the Lingbao Tradition, DZ 466) (Fig. 18)

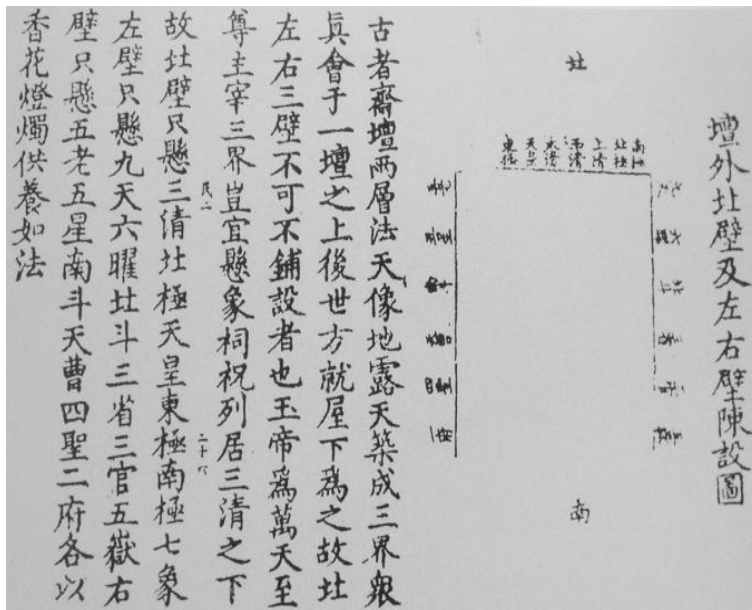


Fig. 18 Diagram of the Image Display on the North, West and East Walls of the Outer Altar (DZ 466, 7:27c-28a).

²⁶ In these 14th-century sources, the two messengers are further identified as the “Qingyang Messenger Yang [Ruming]” (擎羊楊[汝明]使者) and the “Tuoluoni Messenger [Geng Miaozen]” (陀羅耿[妙真]使者), members of Dipper troops.

²⁷ The iconography of the Hōgonji scroll is comparable to the fifteenth century Water Land painting from the Buddhist Monastery Baoningsi 寶寧寺; see Shanxi 1985, pl. 74; Mollier 2008, Fig. 4.12, 171.

According to this, the image of the Dipper is to be suspended (*xuan* 懸) on the east [left] wall of the outer altar area next to images of the Nine Heavens (*jutian* 九天), the Six Planets (*liuyao* 六曜), the Three Chan-celleries (*sansheng* 三省), the Three Officials (*sanguan* 三官), and the Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue* 五嶽) (Huang 2001, 13, Fig. 4).

The imperial painting catalogue of the Northern Song, the *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Xuanhe Painting Catalogue), sponsored by Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100-1125), labels numerous Daoist paintings from the early Song as images of star deities, quite like those marked on the altar diagram.²⁸ Some of these paintings may even have been transmitted to the Southern Song court and used there on ritual occasions.

Conclusion

This article investigates the esoteric image tradition of body gods and starry travel as alternative sources of Daoist art and visual culture. The majority of images under investigation are the illustrations, charts, maps from the Ming Daoist Canon. These Daoist images form an important part of Chinese *tu* 圖, which denotes broadly pictures, charts, diagrams, drawings, designs, and picture-like texts (Reiter 1990; Bray et al. 2007). A systematic study of these Daoist images also helps us to re-think Daoist mysticism, visualization and meditation from a visual angle.

In representing body gods, some images highlight the gods exiting the adept's body (Fig. 2a-d), others focus on generic bureaucratic gods (Figs. 4, 6a-d), while others yet depict these gods in dynamic movement, stressing their abilities to be swiftly summoned and navigate in cosmos (Fig. 7a-b). The evocation of body gods, though not visible to the audience observing the ritual, plays a crucial role in the officiant's visualization and the performance of "calling forth the officers" as a mean to activate the ritual.

The images of the journeys to the stars, on the other hand, emphasize the connection between the stars and the individual. Some stress the

²⁸ Paintings of astral deities are listed under the headings of "Daoist and Buddhist Paintings" (*Daoshi* 道釋) as well as "Figure Paintings" (*Renwu* 人物). See *Xuanhe huapu*, in *Zhongguo shuhua quanshu* 中國書畫全書, vol. 2, edited by Lu Fusheng 盧輔聖 (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanshe, 1993), 64-75, 78, 83; Huang 2001, 14; Ebrey 2008, 293-97.

adept's going to the stars (Figs. 8, 11, 12, 13), while others feature the stars' coming to the adept either in private meditation or in ritual performance (Figs. 15, 16, 17).

Most images of body gods and starry travel from the *Daozang* are illustrated in the Six Dynasties-to-Tang Shangqing texts or the Song-dynasty Tianxin texts connected to the earlier Shangqing tradition. Scholars see these texts as internal texts circulated only among selected adepts. This is perhaps why these images, in spite of their repetitive presences in the *Daozang* texts, have remained esoteric in the overall Daoist visuality. Viewed in this way, the images discussed in this article form a contrary to the images we will explore in Part 2 of this study (JDS 2011). There, we will discuss illustrations of body worms and body charts used by inner alchemists from texts in general circulation during the Song.

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Daoist Geographies in Three Korean World Maps

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Abstract

Four Korean maps of the world compiled during the Chosŏn period show Chosŏn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and present known lands from Japan to continental western Europe. These maps are informed by a Confucian ordering of culture and by Daoist conceptions of space. However, the Daoist geography of continents and paradise isles differs among the four maps.

The Tenri University Library's *Tae Myŏng-guk to* (Map of Great Ming) and the Honmyōji temple's *Tae Myŏng-guk chido* (Map of Great Ming) present the most detailed Daoist geographies. Korean elites in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were well read in Chinese poetry, and wrote often of travel to destinations such as those described in *Shizhou ji* (Record of the Ten Continents). These two world maps recast confirmed lands within the four seas where Daoist continents and paradise isles were located and immortals resided.

Four Korean world maps believed to have been completed before 1600 show the world from Chosŏn 朝鮮 Korea and Japan at the viewer's right to continental western Europe and Africa at the viewer's left. This is the physical world that Korean government officials could know when preparing the first world map in 1402 and that was represented in the extant maps. Topography was not limited to observable, confirmable lands, however. Also common to them are terrestrial paradises and other places prominent in Daoist topographies and geographies.

The Korean world map which shows the oldest depiction of Chosŏn presents two of the three terrestrial paradises—Fangzhang 方丈 and Yingzhou 瀛洲—for which Xu Fu 徐福, a Chinese master of methods

(*fangshi* 方士), sailed in his first of two searches for the elixir of longevity in the third century B.C.E. (The third terrestrial paradise is Penglai 蓬萊.) He did not return from the second voyage. The other three world maps all share written references to a shrine in Japan for Xu Fu.

According to legends and histories that circulated later in China, Japan, and Korea, Xu Fu and his ships landed in Japan, near Shingū 新宮 in the Kumano 熊野 area of modern Wakayama Prefecture 和歌山県. Most of the ten continents, four islands, and two mountains in the *Shizhou ji* 十州記 (Record of the Ten Continents, DZ 598; trl. Smith 1990; 1992), a “descriptive geography of terrestrial paradises” attributed to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (ca. 154-93 B.C.E.), are marked and named in two of these three map artifacts. The search for long life and travel to imagined places associated with longevity informed the compilation of all four world maps.

The four Korean world maps are:

Honil kangni yŏktae kukto chi to 混一疆理歷代國都之圖 (Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals), preserved at the Ōmiya Library, Ryūkoku University Academic Information Center in Kyoto;

Honil kangni yŏktae kukto chi to 混一疆理歷代國都之圖 (Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals), preserved at the Honkōji 本光寺 temple in Shimabara, Japan;

Tae Myŏng-guk to 大明國圖 (Map of Great Ming China), preserved at Tenri University Library in Tenri, Japan;

Tae Myŏng-guk chido 大明國地圖 (Map of Great Ming China), preserved at the Honmyōji 本妙寺 temple in Kumamoto, Japan.

The first was completed between 1479 and 1485, or it shows Chosŏn of that time (Robinson 2007, 186-88). This is the earliest depiction of the country in the four map artifacts. The latter three texts were almost certainly compiled in the 16th century and show Chosŏn and China at that time. Using their present location as a way of distinction, I will refer to the first two world maps as the Ryūkoku *Kangnido* and as the Honkōji *Kangnido*, respectively. The third map I will call the Tenri *Tae Myŏng-guk to*, and the fourth map will be the Honmyōji *Tae Myŏng-guk chido*.

Research has divided the four world maps into two branches that stem from the Korean world map compiled in 1402, which is not extant.

In the first branch are the Ryūoku *Kangnido* and the Honkōji *Kangnido*. In the second are the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido*, which are thought to be "sister" maps reproduced from the same map of an earlier generation (Unno 1957, 64). Unno Kazutaka (2004, 282, 218), Kawamura Hirotada (1994, 15-16), and Ōji Toshiaki (1996, 101-03) all have noted Daoist matters expressed through the Xu Fu reference and imagined places in these maps. Unno first identified the continents and mentioned that seas encompass the continental landmass in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* (2004, 216). However, these three scholars did not treat Daoist features in the Korean world maps in detail.

The four maps "collate[d] on the same plane heterogeneous places, some received from a tradition and others produced by observation" (De Certeau 1984, 121). They combine imagined Daoist geographies of longevity and travel to unconfirmed places with the knowable physical realm. In addition to the journeys of Xu Fu, the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* also present the *Shizhou ji* topography. Robert Campany writes regarding anomaly and cosmography, "[T]he display often aims at a complete summa of the cosmos. The taxonomic space of cosmographic display becomes a plenum to mirror the world it emblemizes; nothing less is intended than a total representation of the world" (1996, 11). The Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* represent the complete physical world known through earlier Korean world maps and the geography of continents, islands, and mountains in *Shizhou ji*. Compared to the *Kangnido* maps, the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* embed confirmed lands in a different conception of space.

The Xu Fu references also encourage attention to Chinese, Korean, and Japanese writing about this master of methods. And they require examination of Chinese maps for possible antecedent data. The first part of this paper will focus on the Xu Fu notes in the three world maps, the second part on the imagined lands drawn into the seas.

Xu Fu's Travels in the 3rd Century B.C.E.

Scholars believe that the Honkōji, Tenri, and Honmyōji world maps derive ultimately from the 1402 compilation, which is generally referred to as the 1402 *Kangnido*. Each map artifact also bears data that could not have been in the 1402 text, such as the representations of Korea, China, or Ryukyu 琉球. Like the 1402 *Kangnido*, these too are hybrid texts culled from various cartographic traditions and sources.

We do not know who requested the compilation of any of the four extant maps, who compiled the maps, or when they were completed. Place names in the image of Chosŏn may suggest that the Honkōji *Kangnido* was completed, or shows Chosŏn, on or prior to 1549/5/21 or on or after 1567/10/12. The Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to*, assuming it not to be a reproduction of an earlier world map, may be dated to between on or after 1549/5/21 and on or by 1567/10/12. Dating the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* also is difficult. Like the Honkōji *Kangnido* its completion, or the image of Chosŏn, may be dated to on or prior to these dates.

Turning to Xu Fu, as recorded in the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian), he informed the First Emperor of the Qin in 219 B.C.E. that there were three mountain isles in the sea to the east called Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou, and that on these islands lived sages who had achieved eternal life (6.247). Penglai had been placed earlier in the Bo Sea 渤海 and populated with Daoist sages in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas, 12.4ab). The emperor granted Xu Fu's request to sail in search of the islands and the immortals, and sent "several thousands" of young boys and young girls with him (6.258). In 212, he learned that the mission had not succeeded in finding the medicines for the elixir of eternal life. In 210, he dispatched Xu Fu a second time to find the elixir, but the mariner did not return (6.263).

The longest rendering of Xu Fu's activities in the *Shiji* is in the chapter on "The Biographies of the Kings of Huainan and Hengshan." It says:

Then the First Emperor of the Qin sent Xu Fu to sail over the sea in search of the spirits, and he returned and lied to the emperor, saying:

In the midst of the sea I met a great spirit who asked me if I were the envoy from the Emperor of the West. When I an-

swered that I was, he asked me what I was seeking for. "I am looking for the medicine which increases one's years and brings long life," I said.

"Your king of Qin," replied the spirit, "is too stingy with his courtesy! You may see the medicine, but you cannot take it back with you!"

Then he led me to the southeast, to the mountain of Penglai, where I saw palaces and towers surrounded by lawns of grass. There was a messenger, copper-colored and shaped like a dragon, with streams of light pouring from his body and lighting up the sky. When I saw him I bowed before him twice and asked: "What sort of offerings should I bring?"

The Sea God (for that was what he was) replied: "If you will bring me the sons of good families, and beautiful maidens, along with the products of your various craftsmen, then you may have the medicine!"

When the First Emperor heard this, he was overjoyed and immediately sent Xu Fu back east again, accompanied by 3,000 boys and girls of good families and bearing presents of seeds of the five types of grains and articles produced by the various craftsmen.

But when Xu Fu reached Bingyuan and Guangze, he halted his journey, made himself king of the region, and never returned to the Qin. With this, the people were filled with sorrow and bitterness and six families out of every ten favored revolt (118.3086; Watson 1961, 2:374-75).¹

The earliest mention of Xu Fu in the *Shiji* reports that he sailed for Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou. But these were not his only destinations as is evident from the *Shizhou ji*'s account of his voyage. The core

¹ An abbreviated rendering of this account appears in the *Hanshu* (*Hanshu*, 45.2171). I have converted the Wade-Giles romanizations to Pinyin. Xu Fu's travels are retold in *Hanshu* 45.2171; *Hou Hanshu* 85.2822-2823; and *Sanguo zhi*, 47.1136. The *Sanguo zhi* entry is dated to 230. According to *Hou Hanshu*, Xu Fu stopped at a land in the sea. Becoming its ruler, his descendants governed the land for many generations. The next entry in the *Hou Hanshu* relates Kija's 其子 flight to Chosŏn. In the view of Pak Chiwŏn 朴趾源 (1737-1805), Xu Fu performed the role of culture conveyor for Japanese that Kija had performed for Koreans (*Yŏnam chip* 燕巖集, HMC 252, 15.38b).

text of *Shizhou ji*—the ten continents—dates to the Han period but is extant in an expanded text completed in the fifth or sixth centuries (Smith 1992, 213, 215; 2008, 2:898-99; Loewe 2000, 74; Barrett 2007, 488-89). Here Xu Fu headed toward Zuzhou 祖洲, another continent in the eastern sea (Smith 1992, 538-39).

In later centuries, Xu Fu's search for the elixir of eternal life became a topic for interpretation in Japan and Chosŏn. His final landfall often was located somewhere in Japan, or was identified as a Japanese place after he had passed through the island now called Cheju and now in South Korea (see Hong 2002). The Honkōji *Kangnido*, the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to*, and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* present elements of the telling of Xu Fu's voyages in the *Shiji* and in *Shizhou ji* and their reinterpretation in Japan.

Xu Fu in the Honkōji *Kangnido*

In the Japanese town of Shingū is a grave said to be for Xu Fu and allegedly refurbished in 1736. Tokugawa Yorinobu 徳川頼宣 (1602-1671), the daimyo (1619-1667) of the Kii domain where Shingū was located had earlier commissioned a marker of Xu's passing. It is not clear how this place relates to the shrine for Xu Fu located on the grounds of the Asuka Shrine 阿須賀神社, part of the Shingū Shrine 新宮神社 (one of the three shrines of the Kumano complex). Also, near Shingū is a mountain called Hōraizan (Penglai shan). It seems that, in popular imagination, Xu Fu had finally reached Penglai, through translocation to a foreign landscape (see Verschuer 1995).

The Honkōji *Kangnido* mentions Xu Fu in its description of the ocean east of Shikoku 四国 and west of the red circle that marks the capital of Japan in central Honshu 本州. The entries in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* also appear in the sea near Shikoku. Although set further to the east, these too are west of the capital. The Xu Fu text in the Honkōji *Kangnido* differs from that. It has: "Xu was a person who left Qin; there is a shrine [for him]." The captions in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* are the same, and may be translated as: "The shrine for Xu Fu, who left Qin."

This translation of the Honkōji *Kangnido* text softens the meaning of the character *bi* 避, glossed above as "left." This character may be trans-

lated more closely as "fled" or "avoided." As a compound, *biqin* 避秦 means "to avoid" or "flee" the chaos of Qin politics in the last years of the third century B.C.E., and later came to carry the more general meaning of "to flee political chaos" (Morohashi 1985, 11:194). That definition informs the more literal reading of the text in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido*.

Korean texts from the early Chosŏn period have the same three characters that begin the Honkōji *Kangnido's* note: *biqin ren* 避秦人.² The term typically refers to a person who fled Qin during political chaos. However, the entries in the *Shiji* and other Chinese official histories do not portray Xu Fu as fleeing. The *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Han), on the other hand, states that Xu Fu departed Qin accompanied by large numbers of boys and girls, and that he "fled and did not return" (25B.1260). However, it uses a different character for "fled" (*tao* 逃). While I have not found the phrasing of the Honkōji *Kangnido's* note in earlier texts, this reference in the map reflects Korean knowledge of Xu Fu in Japan.

Xu Fu in Japan in Written Texts

Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans placed Xu Fu in Japan variously. The earliest extant Chinese reference to Xu Fu being in Japan may be in a tenth-century text about Japan by the monk Yichu 義楚. He wrote, apparently after having met a Japanese monk who was in China in 958, that Xu Fu had landed in Japan and had visited Mt. Fuji 富士山 or Mt. Peng-lai 蓬萊山 and that his descendants bear the family name Hata 秦 (*Yichu liutie* 義楚六帖 11.4b [ed. *Zengaku tenseki sōkan* 禅学典籍叢刊 6.2]; Verschuer 1999, 28-29). This association of Xu and Mt. Fuji suggests knowledge in Japan of the mariner's activities by the mid-tenth century at the latest. Fifty years later, in Japan Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部, the author of

² Texts include Sō Kōjōng's 徐居正 *Saga chip* 四佳集, contained in the collection *Hanguk munjip ch'onggan* (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe), hereafter abbreviated HMC, vol. 10, 7:6.8a; Kim Chōng's 金淨 *Ch'ungam chip* 冲庵集 (HMC 23, 12.26b); and Yi Mingū's 李敏求 *Tongju chip* 東州集 (HMC 94, 21.6ab).

Genji monogatari 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji), mentioned the mariner in a diary entry dated to 1009.10.28 (Bowring 1982, 168).³

Another early Japanese reference, albeit indirect, to Xu Fu is in Kitabatake Chikafusa's 北畠親房 (1293-1354) *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記 (A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns), completed in 1343. In the entry for Emperor Kōrei 孝靈天皇 (r. 290-215 B.C.E.), he writes:

In [Emperor] Kōrei's forty-fifth year, the First Emperor acceded to the throne of Qin. he was much interested in the art of wizards [immortals] and sought the elixir of eternal life in Japan. When Japan responded by requesting copies of the Books of the Five Kings and Three Emperors, the First Emperor sent them over. (Kitabatake 1924, 6; Varley 1989, 90-91).

Chikafusa did not identify Xu Fu specifically, but scholars link this text with the mariner's activities and related entries in Chinese official histories.

Perhaps the earliest reference to a shrine to Xu Fu in Japan is in a poem by the Chinese monk Wuxue Zuyuan 無學祖元 (Mugaku Sogen, 1226-1286) who moved to Japan in 1279 and founded Engakuji 円覺寺, a Rinzaï Zen 臨濟禪 temple in Kamakura 鎌倉. The phrase "Xu Fu Shrine" is in the poem's title, and the poem notes his arrival in Japan. While likely a coincidence, the first two characters in the Honkōji *Kangnido's* Xu Fu text *biqin* are in the last line of this poem. Through those two characters Wuxue Zuyuan referred to himself as having "fled from politics and come to Japan" (Chō 2003, 78-79). In the 1270s, the Yuan government was pressing its attack against Southern Song, and defeated that government in 1279. Zheng Sixiao's 鄭思肖 (1241-1318) poem *Yuan dagong Riben baibei ge* 元韃攻日本敗北歌 (Yuan Will Attack and Japan Will Be Defeated), written in 1281 or later, also is forwarded as the earliest mention of the Xu Fu shrine in Japan. Zheng mentions the shrine in the seventh line, and clarifies in a note that it is in Japan (Shibata 1997, 642).

³ Richard Bowring notes the debate over the dating of the section in *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* in which this passage appears (1982, 166-68). The date provided here is from *Dai Nihon shiryō* 2.6:459-60.

That the shrine to Xu Fu in Japan was in Kumano may perhaps be first confirmed in the poem *Ting kehua Xiongye Xu Fu miao* 聽客話熊野徐福廟 (Hearing from a Guest of the Shrine to Xu Fu in Kumano) by Wu Lai 吳萊 (ca. 1297-1340). The poem's first line indicates that Kumano and the shrine are in Kii Province (Chō 2003, 79). In 1368, the monk Zekkai Chūshin 絶海中津 (1334-1405) arrived in Ming China representing Japan. In an exchange of verse with the Ming emperor, his poem *Ōsei fu san san* 應制賦三山 (Rhyme Describing the Three Mountains, Composed in Response to the Imperial Command; ed. *Dai Nihon shiryō* 大日本史料 6.46) began: "Before the peak of Kumano is Xu Fu's shrine" (Ury 1992, 87; Keene 1993, 1074).

Later, the Rinzaï Zen monk Ranpa Keishi 蘭坡景菫 (1417-1501) linked Xu Fu to Mt. Kumano in the title of his poem, *Etsu Jo Fuku byō* 謁徐福廟 (Seeing the Xu Fu Mausoleum). In addition to Mts. Fuji and Kumano, the Japanese also linked the Chinese mariner to Mt. Atsuta 熱田山, apparently from the late 14th century (Ng 2004, 28-29).

This physical remembrance of a foreigner in Kumano linked aspects of the Kumano Shrine complex to the Shingū Shrine where Xu Fu and his ships supposedly landed. The Xu Fu shrine that is mentioned by these and other writers but whose construction cannot be dated linked the Shingū Shrine's deity, manifested in one form as the Medicine Buddha (Yakushi nyōrai 藥氏如來) and the shrine's roles in protecting maritime activities with the complex's cult of healing and longevity (Moerman 2005, 43, 68, 109-10).

When or how Koreans learned of this Xu Fu shrine is not clear (see Shibata 1999). The Koryŏ official Chŏng Mongju 鄭夢周 (1337-1392) wrote in a poem upon being appointed to serve as envoy to Japan in 1377 that "grass grows before the shrine of Xu Fu from spring" (*Poŭn chip* 圃隱集, HMC 5, 1.25b). Perhaps he worried about dying in Japan and being buried there, with no family or descendants nearby to care for his grave. Cho Chun 趙浚 (1346-1405) encouraged Pak Tonji 朴惇之, who had been appointed as envoy to Japan in 1397, to visit Xu Fu's shrine and burn incense (*Songdang chip* 松堂集, HMC 6, 2.27b).

In a poem for the envoy of the retired Shōgun and King of Japan, Ashikaga Yoshimasa 足利義正 (1436-1490) upon his departure for Japan in late 1474 or early 1475, Yi Sŭngso 李承召 (1422-1484) wrote that Xu Fu

“did not return” to his own country (*Wŏnjae mungo* 圓齋稿, HMC 5, 6.8a; *Samt'an chip* 三灘集, HMC 11). Kim Chongjik 金宗直 (1431-1492) lamented to the Japanese monk Jurin upon this envoy's departure to return to Japan that “trees fall in the wind before Xu Fu's shrine” (*Chŏmp'ilchae chip* 佔畢齋集 HMC 12, Kim 1988, 6.14b). In a poem addressed to a Japanese envoy upon his departure for Japan, Pak Sang 朴祥 (1474-1530) noted hopefully that “plants in front of Xu Fu's shrine wish to bring good favor” (訥齋集, HMC 18, 4.26b). And in a poem for Kim Sŏngil 金誠一 (1538-1593) following his appointment in 1589 as Vice Envoy in the embassy to visit Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉, Kim Yunan 金允安 (1562-1620) wrote that “before Xu Fu's shrine the grass is like thin silk” (*Hakpong chip* 鶴峯集, HMC 48, 4.30ab).

Korean officials raised Xu Fu as a symbol of foreign travel and especially of travel abroad at the command of one's ruler. Writing these poems prior to a departure, they often expressed fear or concern about not returning home, and portrayed that fear of dying abroad through images of a grave that family could not care for. Such descriptions of Xu Fu's shrine may also have been encouragement to be careful and remain healthy during the journey.

Another Korean mention of Xu Fu's shrine is in the *Haedong chegukki* 海東諸國紀 (Record of Countries Across the Seas to the East), a government report on relations with Japan and Ryukyu that was completed in 1471. In the chronology of Japanese emperors, the entry on Emperor Kōrei states: “In 219 B.C.E., the First Emperor dispatched Xu Fu, who sailed in search of the elixir of eternal life. Xu Fu eventually reached Kii Province, and settled there” (Sin 1933, 2a). In the entry on Emperor Sujin 崇神天皇 (r. 97-30 B.C.E.), the text notes that after Xu Fu died he “became a god, and is worshiped by Japanese still today” (2b). The two comments together may refer to a shrine and to Mt. Kumano, but the character for “shrine” is not used in the latter entry. Yi Chŏngam 李廷穡 (1541-1600) also noted that Japanese performed rites for the mariner at the shrine (*Saryu chip* 四留齋集, HMC 51, 10:61b).

The image of Japan in the Honkōji *Kangnido* shows certain features—such as the lake and the river east of the capital—that also appear in two maps in the *Haedong chegukki*. They are called the *Haedong cheguk ch'ongdo* 海東諸國總圖 (Overall Map of Countries across the Seas to the

East) and the *Ilbon ponguk chi to* 日本本國之圖 (Map of the Main Island of Japan). There may perhaps be a connection between the texts about Xu Fu in the *Haedong chegukki* and in the *Honkōji Kangnido*. Government officials knew of a shrine to Xu Fu in Japan by the late 14th century, and Korean writers seem to have placed him at Mt. Kumano by early 1472. Also set near Honshu in the three Korean world maps are the paradise isles toward which Xu Fu sailed.

Paradise Isles in China, Japan, and Korea

Compared to the *Ryūkoku Kangnido*, the *Honkōji Kangnido* is a new world map in several respects. These include improvements in the depiction of Japan and Ryukyu. Most important here is the greater number of imagined lands derived from Daoist texts and ancient histories, as well as the connections of those lands with Xu Fu.

The *Ryūkoku Kangnido* has only two immortals' isles named in other Korean world maps: Yingzhou and Fusang 扶桑. The same places also are depicted in the two *Haedong chegukki* maps noted above. In all three, Yingzhou and Fusang are set beyond Japan in the east, that is, beyond confirmed lands. They also appear in the "Dongnanghai yitu" 東南海夷圖 (Map of Countries in the Southeastern Seas) in the *Guang yutu* 廣輿圖 (Enlarged Terrestrial Atlas), a Chinese atlas first printed around 1555 (Cao et al. 1995, pl. 155). This map was supposedly based on the *Shengjiao guangbei tu* 聲教廣被圖 (Map of the Vast Reach of [Civilization's] Resounding Teaching), a Chinese map completed around 1330 (Aoyama 1938, 116, 121-24; Miya 2006, 510). In the "Dongnanghai yitu", Yingzhou and Fusang are below Japan, as that country is at the edge of the map. The Korean government used the *Shengjiao guangbei tu* for much of the 1402 *Kangnido*. The presence of Yingzhou and Fusang in the *Ryūkoku Kangnido* likely derives from the *Shengjiao guangbei tu* through that first Korean world map.

The terrestrial paradises of Penglai and Fangzhang, as well as Yingzhou and Fusang, are also found in the *Honkōji Kangnido*, believed to have been compiled later than the *Ryūkoku Kangnido*. The three isles are arrayed within an arc of five imagined lands. Set south of Honshu, this arc stretches to the northeast from Mt. Penglai through Zuzhou and Mt.

Fangzhang 方丈山 to Yingzhou and Fusang.⁴ The Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk* to and the Honmyōji *chido* each present a similar arc of four large cartouches south of Honshu. While Fusang is named in the latter two maps, the four cartouches do not bear written text but display mountain icons. Considering the presence of Fusang, these four cartouches in both world maps almost certainly were intended for Penglai, Zuzhou, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou.

Daoism has ancient roots in the Korean peninsula, but practitioners and supporters rarely succeeded in establishing an institutional presence. Koreans expressed appreciation of Daoism in various ways over the centuries. For example, images on tiles of places where immortals lived were found in a royal tomb from the sixth century, villagers composed portraits of mountain hermits who often were immortals thought to be living nearby, and the Chosŏn government established a government office for managing the performance of Daoist rites. Confucian-educated officials even sought out methods of internal alchemy, a feature of Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) Daoism, in order to live longer and thereby better perform filial duties to their parents (Grayson 2002, 52; Baker 2008, 101, 56; Jung 2000, 792-820; Ch'a 1986, 47).

Poetry was another common venue where Korean elites, especially men steeped in the Confucian classics, deployed Daoist themes as they participated in the shared culture (Lee 1986). In the 15th century, Kim Sisŭp 金時習 (1435-1493) imbued many of his poems with Daoist themes. For example, he placed the reader at Daoist state rites and, writing of eternal life, inserted the reader among Daoist immortals. Kim also was a frequent visitor to the government office for Daoist rites. And he transmitted three forms of Daoist teachings to three different students (Ch'a 1986, 50-52). The interest of government officials and other highly educated elites in Daoism, or, more narrowly, in Daoist themes in literature is perhaps found most broadly in poetry and other writings, where references not only to Xu Fu but also to mountain isles, continents, the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwang mu 西王母), and Dongfang Shuo abound.

⁴ In Korean writings, see Hō Kyun 許筠 (1569-1618) for a linkage of Zuzhou to Yingzhou and Fangzhang (*Sōngso pubugo* 惺所覆瓿, HMC 74, 8:206-11).

Writers in Chosŏn replicated, translocated, and adapted the three paradises in their country. Their assignations to Korean mountains varied, however. For example, Mt. Chiri 智異山 was also called Pangjang (Fangzhang; see *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* 39.2b). Ch'a Ch'ollo 車天輅 (1556-1615) considered Fangzhang to be Mt. Halla 漢拏山, Yingzhou to be Mt. Chiri, and Penglai to be Mt. Kŭmgang 金剛山 (Ch'a 1969, 230-31). Kim Yong 金涌 (1557-1620) listed Mts. Kŭmgang, Chiri, and Myohyang 妙香山 as being "called from ancient times the three mountain isles in the eastern sea" (*Unch'ŏn chip* 雲川集, HMC 63, 1.38a-40b). Yu Mongin 柳夢寅 (1559-1623) cited Mt. Myohyang as Fangzhang and Mt. Chiri as Yingzhou (*Ŏu chip hujip* 於于集後集, HMC 63, 3.31b-32b). Meanwhile, Yi Chŏnggwi 李廷龜 (1564-1635) associated Mt. Chiri with Fangzhang and Mt. Pyŏn 邊山 with Yingzhou (*Wŏlsa chip* 月沙集, HMC 70, 40.18b-19a). The matching of a Korean mountain with a mountain isle or continent in the 16th century and the early 17th century was not settled.

Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou formed two sets in the Honkōji *Kangnido*: as the three paradise isles in the eastern sea and as the destinations of Xu Fu in his search for the elixir of longevity. The presence of Zuzhou in this map combined with the story in *Shizhou ji* of Xu Fu's search for this continent and its ingredients for the elixir of eternal life to compose a set of four imagined isles. With Zuzhou between Mt. Penglai and Mt. Fangzhang in the arc, this set of four imagined places likely was linked to Xu Fu. However, Korean world maps almost certainly were not the first visual images to indicate the presence in Japan of a shrine to Xu Fu.

The Xu Fu Shrine in Chinese Maps

Notice of a shrine to Xu Fu in Japan appears in Chinese maps of the 15th and 16th centuries, and almost certainly a map from the Yuan period. The references are found in representations of Japan set within maps which depict that country together with continental and other maritime areas. These Chinese images will be introduced in detail in an effort to place the Xu Fu references in the three Korean world maps in a cartogenealogical context.

The discussion begins with the *Guanglun jiangli tu* 廣輪疆理圖 (Map of Integrated Regions and Terrains) in the fifteenth-century text *Shuidong riji* 水東日記 (Diary from Shuidong) by Ye Sheng 葉盛 (1420-1474), but first printed after his death, possibly between 1488 and 1505 (Miya 2006, 490). This image shows Ming China, Koryŏ 高麗, T'amna 耽羅 (Cheju), and Ryukyu among other places. Below T'amna are three island icons that represent Japan. In the first island icon from the left are eight characters that seem to form four words. Two of these words are Hizen 肥前 (a province in northwestern Kyushu) and Dazai[fu] 太宰[府] (the regional administration office in Chikuzen Province 筑前州, in northern Kyushu). The middle island icon has seven characters that form two place names and one phrase. The two place names are Nagato 長門 (a province in western Honshu) and Aka[ma]gaseki 赤[間]関 (a port in Nagato Province 長門州). The phrase is "Xu Fu ci" 徐福祠, or "the shrine for Xu Fu." The third icon also bears Japanese place names.

Ye Sheng produced this image in or after 1452, the year Yan Jie 嚴節 completed a map based upon the map *Guanglun jiangli tu* 廣輪疆理圖 (Map of Integrated Regions and Terrains) by the Chinese monk Qingjun 清濬. Yan had redrawn Qingjun's map of 1360 to show the Ming government's administrative geography. Ye referred to the *Guanglun jiangli tu*, which he had thus viewed as a 15th-century reproduction depicting current Chinese administrative geography, in the introduction to his own map in the *Shuidong riji* (17.1b). Qingjun's map is that which Kwŏn Kŭn 權近 (1352-1409) called *Hunyi jiangli tu* 混一疆理圖 (Map of Integrated Regions and Terrains) in his commemoration for the 1402 *Kang-nido* (*Yangch'on chip* 陽村集, HMC 7, 22.2b). It was one of two Chinese maps used in the compilation of that world map (Miya 2006, 494).

Reference to Xu Fu also appears in the *Guang yutu*, an atlas compiled circa 1555 by Luo Hongxian 羅洪先 (1504-1564) and expanded in the 16th century. Luo based much of the *Guang yutu* upon the atlas *Yutu* 輿圖 (Terrestrial Map), which Zhu Siben 朱思本 (1273-1337) completed in 1320. The *Guang yutu*'s "Dongnanhai yitu" and the map in the *Shuidong riji* map refer to Xu Fu by the same phrase.

Miya Noriko believes that the "Dongnanhai yitu" and its companion image in the *Guang yutu*, the "Xinanghai yitu", originated in the southern half of the *Shengjiao guangbei tu*, which was compiled by Li

Zemin 李澤民 (Miya 2006, 510; Aoyama 1938, 114-16). The *Shengjiao guangbei tu* was the other Chinese map that the Chosŏn government consulted when compiling the 1402 *Kangnido* (*Yangch'ŏn chip*, HMC 7, 22.2ab).

The discussion below focuses on the "Dongnanghai yitu" in the circa 1555 printing of the *Guang yutu* and in a manuscript reproduction that has been dated to between 1558 and 1561 (Fuchs 1946, 18). This manuscript text is thought to present the format of the original circa 1555 text (Aoyama 1935, 155). The date of the first printing of the *Guang yutu* is not known with certainty. Walter Fuchs suggested "about 1555" (1946, 3); Ren Jincheng between 1553 and 1557 (1995, 36). Below, too, this earliest extant edition will be referred to as the circa 1555 printing. The presentation of Japan in both texts is similar to, but more detailed than that in the map in the *Shuidong riji*.

Below the Korean peninsula, the "Dongnanghai yi tu" shows, from left to right, one smaller and three larger island icons. Inside are place names and other information relating to Japan. Not only is there an additional island icon, but they also convey more written information. In the third island icon is the reference to Xu Fu, as "Xu Fu ci" 徐福祠, or "the shrine for Xu Fu."

Miya suggests "the possibility is high" that Qingjun and Li Zemin relied upon a common map for their representations of Japan (2007, 69-70). The references to Xu Fu in Ye Sheng's *Shuidong riji* and in the "Dongnanghai yi tu" in the circa 1555 printing of the *Guang yutu* probably derived from Qingjun's *Guanglun jiangli tu* and Li Zemin's *Shengjiao guangbei tu*, respectively. It is quite likely that a Chinese map, most likely the *Shengjiao guangbei tu*, provided the model for the mention of Xu Fu and the shrine for him in Japan in a Korean world map.⁵

⁵ It might be noted that in addition to Yingzhou and Fusang, the *Haedong cheguk ch'ongdo* and the *Ilbon ponguk chi* to share nine other place names in the area south of Honshu that were not Japanese islands with the "Dongnanghai yitu" and the "Xinanghai yitu". It would thus seem that these nine places in both *Haedong chegukki* maps derive ultimately from the *Shengjiao guangbei tu*, and perhaps through the 1402 *Kangnido*. However, how these nine places marked in the two *Guang yutu* maps came to be geographically proximate in the two *Haedong chegukki* maps and in the *Ryūkyoku Kangnido* is unclear.

Three Korean world maps present Daoist geographies shaped by the voyages of Xu Fu and by the legend of his death in Japan. Stated differently, they relate Xu's life, death, and remembrance as constructed in China, in Japan, and in Korea. The marking in the Honkōji *Kangnido* of Penglai, Fangzhang, Yingzhou, and Zuzhou allows the suggestion that the note and these imagined places may be read as retelling one or both voyages. That is, Xu's journeys in search of the elixir of longevity, both historical as in *Shiji* and recast as in *Shizhou ji*, are retold through imagined places in the eastern sea, and (the legend of) his landfall and death in the Kumano area through the note and memorialization. The depiction of additional geographies of space and movement in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* separate these two compilations from the *Kangnido* texts.

Daoist Geographies

The Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* show more places drawn from Daoist imaginaries than the two *Kangnido* maps. They embed the continents, islands, and mountains in a topography that extends travel to the terrestrial paradises. Korean elites active in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries knew those places well and visited them through poetry.

The continents arrayed in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* derived from *Shizhou ji*. The edition of *Shizhou ji* in the Daoist canon describes the ten continents of Zuzhou, Yingzhou, Xuanzhou 玄洲 (K. Hyōnju), Yuanzhou 元洲 (K. Wōnju), Yanzhou 炎洲 (K. Yōmju), Changzhou 長洲 (K. Changju), Liuzhou 流洲 (K. Yuju), Shengzhou 生洲 (K. Saengju), Fenglinzhou 鳳麟洲 (K. Pongninju), and Jukuzhou 聚窟洲 (K. Ch'wigulchu). It also describes the four islands of Canghaidao 滄海島 (K. Ch'anghae-do), Fangzhangzhou 方丈洲 (K. Pang-jangju), Fusang, and Pengqiu 蓬丘 (K. Ponggu; i.e., Penglai), and the two mountains of Kunlun 崑崙 (K. Kollyun), and Zhongshan 鍾山 (K. Chongsan). This topography is important for distinguishing the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* among the *Kangnido* world maps.

The shaping of the Eurasian continent and the seas in the two branches of Korean world maps will be discussed first. In the two *Kangnido* maps, the title is written across the top of the map from right to left. Below it are lists of administrative data. Both rows of text were written atop the continental landmass that extends in the maps from eastern Asia to continental western Europe. Kwŏn Kŭn's commemoration for the 1402 *Kangnido* is reproduced in both maps and extends across the bottom from right to left. The extension of seas southward in each map stops at the frame within which the commemoration is set. Differing from the *Kangnido* maps, the Tenri *Tae Myŏng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myŏng-guk chido* do not bear a title, present the lists of administrative data, or reproduce the commemoration. Mapped space continues to the top and bottom edges of both world maps' surfaces. The two titles used in this paper are the titles used in the literature. How they were chosen, however, is not clear.

To focus briefly on the title and the lists of administrative data, in the *Kangnido* maps, the Eurasian landmass continues northward under the two lines of written text up to the top edge of the map surface. The mapmakers reconfigured and reconstituted the north in the Tenri and Honmyōji texts. They did not reproduce these two lines in these versions, which contributed to changes that help distinguish these two sets of world maps. First, as the Tenri and Honmyōji texts show China as Ming China, they do not reflect Yuan China through place names and administrative units of that period. In this sense, the Tenri and Honmyōji world maps may represent a form of separation from the Yuan origins of the Korean world maps and to show more fully than did the Honkōji *Kangnido*, which also presents Ming China, the contemporary world as could then be known by Korean elites. Second, dropping the title and the lists opened space at the top of these world maps.

Koreans had known of these continents and other imagined lands, and probably *Shizhou ji*, too, for centuries before the production of the Tenri and Honmyōji maps (see Cho 1992). An early Korean reference to the ten continents is found in a poem by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn 崔致遠, who lived from 858 to circa 910 and who served in the Tang China government from the age of 18 to the age of 27. Ch'oe's mention of the "ten continents" may suggest that he had learned of them while in China and

that *Shizhou ji* was known in Korea in the late ninth century and the early 10th century (*Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng* 桂苑筆耕 19.73a-74a). The Koryŏ government official Yi Kyubo 李奎報 (1168-1241) utilized continents in several poems (*Tongguk Yi Sangguk chŏnjip* 東國李相國集, HMC 1, 6.3b-4a, 3.5b, 18.15b-16a).

The "ten continents," the "ten continents and three islands," individual continents, and other imagined places appear frequently in Chosŏn-period poetry, especially in contexts of travel to a continent or presence in a continent, and in other writing. Among writers active in the late Koryŏ and the early Chosŏn periods, Yi Saek 李穡 (1328-1396) wrote of the azure Shengzhou in a travel poem (*Mogŭn sigo* 牧隱詩稿, HMC 2, 2.11a). Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501-1570), well known by his pen name T'oegye 退溪 and perhaps Korea's most important scholar of Neo-Confucianism, wrote of travel in a dream to Pengqiu (Penglai), and in another poem of crossing to Shengzhou (*T'oegye chip pyŏlchip* 退溪集別集, HMC 31, 1.30a, 1.6b-7a). Yi Saek in his "Yu kam" 有感 (Expressing Feelings, HMC 2, 10.7ab), Hong Kwidal 洪貴達 (1438-1504) in his "Ka Song-ch'am" 過松站 (Passing through Song Station, HMC 14, 4.29b-30a), and Yu Hoin 兪好仁 (1445-1494) in his "Ŭm chung ka 飲中歌" (Drinking Song, HMC 15, 7.33a) all referred to Pengqiu. In the poem "Tŭng Pongnae-gak" 登蓬萊閣 (Ascending to the Pongnae Pavilion, HMC 7, 6.26a), Kwŏn Kŭn reminded his readers that Xu Fu did not return from a voyage. Kim Anguk 金安國 (1478-1543) wrote of floating beyond the ten continents and three islands (*Mokche chip* 慕齋集, HMC 20, 7.20ab).

Similarly, Yang Saŏn 楊士彦 (1517-1584) and Yi Chun (1560-1635) mentioned Fenglinzhou (*Pongnae sijip* 蓬萊詩集, HMC 36, 1.14a; *Ch'angsŏk chip* 蒼石集, HMC 64, 3.22a). Korean poets also enjoyed Yanzhou.⁶ Yang Saŏn and others wrote about Xuanzhou, though Jukuzhou was perhaps the least popular of the ten continents among Korean elites.⁷ More writers and poems could be cited writing about each of the

⁶ Examples include Chŏng Ch'ŭ (HMC 5, Sang.15a); Kim Chŏng (HMC 23, 3.34a); and Chŏng Saryong (HMC 13, 6.8a).

⁷ See Yang Saŏn, *Pongnae sijip* 蓬萊詩集, HMC 36, 2.13a; Ko Kyŏngmyŏng, 高敬命 *Chebonng chip* 霽峯集, HMC 42 1.20b-21a; and Ch'a Ch'ŏllo 車天輅, *Osan chip* 五山集, HMC 61, 2.45a).

continents. Beyond this, people also identified themselves through these imagined places. Yang Saŏn's pen name was Pongnae. Cho Ch'anhan 趙繼漢 (1572-1631) and Yi Sohan 李昭漢 (1598-1645), two officials active in the first half of the 17th century, were both known as Hyŏnju. And Sŏng Munjun 成文濬 (1559-1626) used the pen name Ch'angnang 滄浪.

The *Shizhou ji* identifies the sea in which each continent is located. In the Eastern Sea are Zuzhou, Yingzhou, and Shengzhou; in the Northern Sea are Xuanzhou and Yuanzhou; in the Southern Sea are Changzhou and Yanzhou; and in the Western Sea are Fenglinzhou, Liuzhou, and Jukuzhou.⁸ Six of these ten continents are named in both the Tenri *Tae Myŏng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myŏng-guk chido*. These are Shengzhou in the Eastern Sea, Changzhou and Yanzhou in the Southern Sea, and Fenglinzhou, Liuzhou, and Jukuzhou in the Western Sea. Not written are the names of two continents in the Eastern Sea (Zuzhou and Yingzhou) and the two continents in the Northern Sea (Xuanzhou and Yuanzhou). In comparison, the Ryūkyō *Kangnido* and the Honkōji *Kangnido* both name three of these ten continents: Yingzhou, Changzhou, and Fenglinzhou. The inclusion of imagined continents may not have been an innovation in the Tenri *to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myŏng-guk chido*, but their depiction was systematic, if incomplete. Still, knowledgeable viewers may have been able to see the four continents not named in these two world maps.

The names of these six continents were written vertically within four-sided boxes that were inside cartouches larger than typical islands (excluding here the three main islands of Japan and Ryūkyū). Mountain icons, which are colored in some instances, were sketched within the cartouches and near the boxes. Only the marking of Shengzhou did not set the place name within a four-sided box and did not accompany the place name with mountain icons.

⁸ *Shizhou ji* 1a-8a; *Shizhou sandao* in *Yunji qiqian* 26:1a-22b. Yi Sugwang 李睟光 (1563-1628) located the continents differently in his *Chibong yusŏl* 芝峰類說, which he completed in 1614 (2:3b-4a). Citing the *Yuanweiyu bian* 宛委餘編, he placed Xuanzhou in the Northern Sea, Yingzhou and Zuzhou in the Eastern Sea, Fenglinzhou, Jukuzhou, and Shengzhou in the Western Sea, Yanzhou in the Southern Sea, and Yuanzhou and Changzhou in the Great Sea 大海. Canghai dao, too, was in the Great Sea and Muzhou 穆洲 in the Eastern Sea.

In the Northern Sea and in the Eastern Sea are the cartouches within which place names were not written in the four-sided boxes. The cartouches in the Northern Sea do not display mountain icons, either. Those two cartouches presumably would be for Xuanzhou and Yuanzhou. As the *Shizhou ji* placed Xuanzhou in the northwest, perhaps that continent would have been named in the westernmost cartouche (2ab; Smith 1992, 540-41).

Similarly, in the Eastern Sea is the arc of four cartouches with empty vertical rectangular boxes. This arc is in the same area as that in the Honkōji *Kangnido* which shows Mt. Penglai, Zuzhou, Mt. Fangzhang, and Yingzhou. All four cartouches in the Tenri *to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* have colored mountain icons. Both below and further above the fourth island cartouche to the right in the arc are two other island cartouches that also have empty vertical rectangle boxes. Neither of those two cartouches, though, has mountain icons.

It would seem almost certain that the arcs of four cartouches in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* were outlined for the same places that are named in the Honkōji *Kangnido*. That is, these four cartouches would present Mt. Penglai, Zuzhou, Mt. Fangzhang, and Yingzhou. If so, this would account for the absence of Zuzhou and Yingzhou as named continents in the Eastern Sea and for the absence of Penglai and Fangzhang as named islands.

Between the arc and Honshu in the Tenri *to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* is a fifth cartouche with mountain icons but no name. More specifically, that cartouche in both maps as marked south of and between Izu Province 伊豆州 and Awa Province 安房州 in eastern Honshu in the Tenri text and below Awa Province in the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido*. Jokoku 女國, the Isle of Women, an imagined land in Japanese tradition, appears in this location in the Honkōji *Kangnido*.⁹ This

⁹ Jokoku is not in the Ryūkoku *do*. However, it appears in the *Haedong cheguk ch'ongdo* and the *Ilbon ponguk chi to*. The latter map notes that Jokoku was "thirteen *ri* from Mutsu" in northern Honshu. A province in 15th-century Japan, Mutsu 陸奥 is not specifically marked as a province in these two *Haedong chegukki* maps as the administrative marker for "province" is not attached to this place name. In the Japan gazetteer in *Haedong chegukki*, though, is an entry for "Mutsu Province" (52b).

blank cartouche in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* probably was marked to place Jokoku. Across the four maps, this and two other imagined lands in Japanese traditions, Gandō and Rasetsu-koku, are found. Though named inconsistently in the maps, they represent one or more other lands of tradition and not observable.

The *Shizhou ji* also describes six other places. Of the four islands, Canghai is in the Northern Sea, Fusang is in the Jade-Green Sea, Fangzhangzhou is in the Eastern Sea, and Penglai is beyond the Eastern Sea. Of the two mountains, Kunlun is "in the west to northwest of the Western Sea and the north to northwest of the Northern Sea." And Zhongshan is past the Northern Sea (*Shizhou ji* 9a-13b; Smith 1992, 555). In the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido*, Mt. Kunlun is the northernmost of the two places in the northern area of the Western Sea. The location beyond the Northern Sea may account for Zhongshan's seeming absence, and the absence in both maps of a cartouche that could be indentified as Zhongshan.

In the Western Sea in the two world maps are two large cartouches embellished with colored mountain icons. The northernmost cartouche in the Honmyōji text is Mt. Kunlun. The first character in the place name in the Tenri text is obscured by damage, but the second and third characters match those in the Honmyōji text. The second place in the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* is Kunlun Island. In the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to*, the second character is imperfectly legible because of damage to the surface, but almost certainly is *lun*. If this character may be so read, then both world maps have Kunlun Island in the same location.

The imagined island of Canghai in the *Shizhou ji* does not appear in either world map. In both maps, though, is a place named Mt. Canglang 滄浪山. I have not found a possible source for this place name, although Kim Yong mentions it (HMC 63, 2.1a-2b). This island was drawn and named not in the Northern Sea, but in the viewer's lower right-hand corner in both maps. The *Shizhou ji* text in Xu Tanzhu 續談助, compiled by Chao Zaizhi 晁載之 (fl. 11th c.), placed it in the Northern Sea (5ab).

Fusang, on the other hand, is set near the northeastern coast of Honshu in all four extant world maps. To its north, in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido*, is Mt. Fusang.

There is no vertical rectangle box inside this island cartouche, and mountain icons were sketched and colored.

This placement of Fusang reflects its location closest to where the sun rises. In the “Dongnanhai yitu”, likely derived from the *Shengjiao guangbei tu*, Fusang is marked to the east of Yingzhou. Its placement of Yingzhou to the west of Fusang also appears in the Ryūoku *Kangnido* and in the Honkōji *Kangnido*. Further, only Yingzhou and Fusang among the ten continents and other lands in *Shizhou ji* appear in the “Dongnanhai yitu”, and neither is marked in Ye Sheng’s map in *Shuidong riji*. The presence of Fusang, which Xu Fu did not seek to reach, and Yingzhou in the two *Kangnido* maps, and presumably in the 1402 *Kangnido*, also likely derived from the *Shengjiao guangbei tu*.

The continental landmass extends to the northern, eastern, and western edges of the surfaces of the two *Kangnido* maps. However, in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido*, these imagined continents, isles, and other lands embed the observed continental landmass and islands in new forms of space. The eastern, southern, western, and northern seas in this Daoist topography extend as if one sea to all four edges of the two map surfaces. The continental landmass is now spatially defined not only by countries, population centers, administrative units, coastlines, islands, observed seas, and other features, but also by the four seas and the lands of Daoist tradition.

The *Kangnido* maps embedded the knowable world in a terrestrial, sinocentered space characterized in part by Kwōn Kūn’s statement in the 1402 *Kangnido*’s commemoration that civilization extended “from China in the center to the four seas in the outer limits” (Ledyard 1994, 245). Here “the four seas” indicate cultures and peoples beyond China. The Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* appropriated the *Shizhou ji* and surrounded the terrestrial world with an imagined topography. Emplacing the continental landmass within the four seas reconstituted the terrestrial world depicted in the *Kangnido* maps. The four imagined seas stretched off the map, at least to the unmarked Mt. Zhong in the north and perhaps as far as immortals might travel.

Conclusion

The four extant Korean maps of the world depict heterogeneous spaces. Written text and imagined places related to Daoism grew more diverse from the Ryūkoku *Kangnido* to the Honkōji *Kangnido*, and differed markedly from the Honkōji *Kangnido* in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and the Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido*. Constant across at least the latter three maps was the presence of sites of residence in and travel to places in Daoist tradition. New in the Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* was the reconstitution of mapped space through the new presentation of the *Shizhou ji* geography.

The Tenri *Tae Myōng-guk to* and Honmyōji *Tae Myōng-guk chido* present two topographies. The first is the terrestrial world that Korean elites could know through observation and cartography. The second is an imagined terrestrial Daoist world where immortals and others who had achieved long life resided and which mortals sought to reach by physical travel and by poetry. These two maps of the world reconstituted the physical and imagined topographies in the *Kangnido* branch, emplacing the observable physical realm within a Daoist tradition itself also mapped in a new format. These topographies overlapped in the seas drawn in the east, south, and west. And relocation or travel, whether physical or literary, linked the two worlds in a single, continuous topography.

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Author's Note: Research for this paper has been supported by The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science grant C-19520606. I wish to thank Murai Shōsuke, Fujii Jōji, and Sugiyama Masaaki.

A Day in the Life of Daoist Monk¹

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Abstract

This article seeks to give an ethnographical description of the everyday life of an ordinary Daoist monk in China today. As it follows Yang Zhixiang from early morning until night, it deals with his current main occupations—in this case, work on the glyphomancical dissection of the Dao 道 character, fate calculation for young fiancés, preparation for a healing ritual, the ascetic practice of self-perfecting through refinement, etc. — as well as more basic scenes such as meals, gestures and postures, various domestic tasks, and the reconstruction of the temple. It also relates fragments of his own past life and implicitly outlines the path that led him to the monastery and the vocation that made him become a monk. Finally, it aims to convey the diversity of the monks' activities and then, by considering them serially as a whole, to arrive at an understanding of the specific texture of Daoist monastic life and its reason for being.

The scene is in Hanzhong, a small provincial town in central China (Shaanxi). It is the hour of the hare (*maoshi* 卯时), between five and seven in the morning. A relatively old monk of about sixty years comes out of his cell, stops in the courtyard and takes a deep breath. He finishes buttoning the cloth straps on his blue cotton vest, which he is wearing with black trousers. It is an ordinary day, and for the sake of convenience, he has not put on his long robe, or even his boots and white gaiters; he wears khaki tennis shoes instead. He goes back into his room and re-emerges carrying a basin, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a towel, and a varnished metal cup visibly chipped around the rim.

¹ This paper is a preview of my new book, *A Life of Dao: Monks and Their Community in Contemporary China* (Three Pines Press, 2010), which is an adaptation of my earlier work (Herrou 2005). I would like to thank Brigitte Baptandier, Sophie Houdart, Wang Yiyao and Livia Kohn for their valuable suggestions.

He makes his way to an outdoor tap that is sticking out of a flower-bed in the middle of the patio like a boundary stake. The water is cold. The man brushes his somewhat decayed teeth, then soaks his towel in the water-filled basin and washes his face. He unravels his small bun – a conspicuous sign of his identity as a Quanzhen Daoist monk² – combs his hair, and then rolls it back up around the jade pin that holds it to the top of his head. He also combs the long but sparse hairs that make up his beard. After getting ready, the monk heads to the refectory carrying his own bowl and a pair of wooden chopsticks.

At Wengongci temple 文公祠,³ Yang Zhixiang is not going to the scripture recitation (*nianjing* 念经), the services.⁴ His seniority exempts him or, as he himself says, he has already done work there in the past. For the time being, he is too busy with other activities to be able to return to the fundamentals of Daoist religion. He has no choice but to leave it in the hands of his younger brethren. Besides, scripture masters (*jingshi* 经师) have been appointed by the abbot to look after these services, though others do help them.

² Yang Zhixiang belonged to the Longmen branch of the Quanzhen order. The history of this order, founded under the Jin dynasty (1126-1234) is now well documented and analysed (Marsonne 2001; Goossaert 1997; 2004; 2007; Esposito, 2004; Yoshioka 1979) and more generally the monasticism in Daoism (Kohn 2003; 2007b; Lai 2003; Schipper 1984). But we still have few descriptions of the daily life of monastics. This article attempts to give a sketch of how an ordinary monk spends a common day in contemporary China.

³ Also called Wengongci daoguan 文公祠道观; its principal deity is Wengong, i.e., Han Yu 韩愈, the Tang Dynasty poet who was raised to the level of god of the Southern Door of Heaven, *Nantianmen* 南天门, and was said to be uncle of the famous Han Xiangzi 韩湘子 of the Eight Immortals. The monastery dates back to the Qing dynasty. Yet this holy place may have been erected on the site of a small, much more ancient temple dedicated to the local Earth God, Tudi miao. It is today inhabited by about fifteen permanent monks and nuns, a significant monastic community considering that many small temples have only two or three monks. Furthermore, it is visited by many monks passing through.

⁴ There are three main *nianjing* services that punctuate the day (morning, noon and evening), and that are sometimes followed by an additional mid-evening and/or nighttime service (Herrou, 2008).

The Morning Meal

A multipurpose in the temple room serves as the refectory—as well as the hall where laypeople are received, community meetings held, and telephone calls made. It is a dark space furnished with two worn, unmatching sofas, a large table surrounded by stools, and a desk with a wicker armchair behind it. The room is empty. The monk enters and serves himself a bowl of sticky rice soup, which the cook, a laywoman who lives in the temple, has prepared and left simmering on the brazier. He grabs a piece of steamed bread before taking his food back to his cell. He carefully moves his books and papers out of the way, puts his bowl down on the desk and gulps the soup down quickly. His quiet slurping are the only sound.

Yang is savoring his food all the more because it marks the end of a long fasting period. He is going back to eating cereals after giving them up completely for six months. He wanted to experiment with avoiding grain (*bigu* 辟穀). Eating no rice or noodles, or any other grain, is no easy task at the temple, where the simple, vegetarian meals are composed of rice or noodles plus vegetables and tofu. Yang managed with only fruit and vegetables. He did this on his own initiative, and in fact he was the only monk in the temple to commit to this dietary practice. He explained that his aim was to be prepared for a food shortage, should one occur in the future, and above all he wanted to put his body's resistance to the test. Even if he did not say so, it was probably also so that he could contemplate it over a longer term. In other words, his diet formed part of his effort to transform his mortal body into an immortal one.

Daoism thinks of grain as feeding the Three Worms, which eat away at the inside of the body.⁵ But *bigu* can also mean a complete fast, abstinence from all food, a practice adopted by some monks in other temples. As Yang explains it, one of the aims of Daoist asceticism is to provide one's own nourishment (*zishen de yingyang* 自身的营养): "The heart (*xin* 心) feeds the heart. Inner nature (*xing* 性) feeds inner nature, the breath (*qi* 气) feeds the breath, the destined body (*ming* 命) feeds the

⁵ On cereals as scissors of life and germs of death, see Levi 1983. See also Despeux 2007a; Mollier, 2007.

destined body.”⁶ Is an immortal not one who eats nothing? Yang did not end up experiencing any health problems and continued teaching and meeting with laypeople. He is happy to joke about this; it was not all that hard and his body handled it well. He just lost a lot of weight!

He comes out to rinse his dishes, then stops at the lavatory before returning to his cell. His bed occupies almost a third of the small room, whose walls are covered with newspaper. He folds his blanket and puts it under his pillow, quickly smooths out the pink sheet covering the thin mattress, and then places the sponge on top of the pillow.

Quiet Times

Yang Zhixiang lights his small desk lamp, since there still isn't enough daylight to read by. It comes from a single window blocked by a metal mosquito screen that is darned here and there by big stitches. His desk is in front of the window. The work surface is covered by sheet of glass, under which he has slid a few photos, mostly snapshots of himself standing alone or next to brethren or disciples in the various temples he has visited. The center of the table – his workspace – is clear, but the surrounding area is cluttered with all the things he uses for his various tasks.

At the back, by the wall, are two jade pots filled with a mixture of pencils, cheap ballpoint pens and wooden paintbrushes (some of which are valuable), a small bottle of glue, an ink stone, a magnifying glass, two varnished, wooden paperweights holding down small piles of paper of different sizes, and other “treasures of men of letters.” To the right is a pile of hand-bound manuscript books; on the left, sheets of paper covered in characters, held together by a black clip, and a large calculator

⁶ Another translation of the expression *yiming yangming* 以命养命 could be “fate feeds fate” or “life feeds life” but here I chose to translate *ming* as “destined body”. In the Quanzhen order, when monks speak of the *ming* in relationship to the *xing*, one must understand, according to what some of them have stated explicitly, the distinction between the *xing* as an inner nature or temperament of the person (*xingge* 性格) and *ming* as a physical body (*shenti* 身体), keeping in mind that it is necessary to cultivate both of them at the same time *xingming shuangxiu* 性命双修 if immortality is to be attained through asceticism. In the same context, the *ming* can also designate fate when, as we will see later in the article, it is a question of calculating fates, *suanming*.

that looks like a toy. There is a ginseng root in a jar, soaking in a transparent liquid, a homemade medicinal preparation. To the side is a wooden bookshelf with closed glass doors, crammed full of books that have been stacked haphazardly.

Before laypeople start arriving at the temple, Yang dedicates a little time to his personal work. He puts on his glasses, their frame patched with scotch tape, and starts working. This quiet time is preliminary to a day that, like those previous and following, will become hectic. Time has to be carved up between various activities, such as community responsibilities, ministering to the gods, and time for himself. How each day is sequenced is partly determined by unforeseen events and partly by fixed routines such as the drum calling them to prayers, the bell announcing dinner. Like his brethren, Yang has frequently changing activities in his life. The way these are managed helps shed light on the monks' *raison d'être* and, on a practical level, on how they reconcile religious values with everyday life. Major rituals as well as ordinary activities put beliefs, convictions and temperaments to the test in an enclosed world that is nevertheless open to laypeople during the day. Discussions about doctrine or rituals and casual conversations illustrate different levels of meaning monks employ to express the many implications of their existence. The monks' activities unfold in a monastic present that cannot help occasionally reviving elements of the monks' previous lives. Nevertheless, like the vocation, life's path is charted over the long term.⁷

Learned Pursuits

Yang lifts a typed document from the pile of papers on the corner of his desk. Its bold title reads: "Ten Thousand Methods to Return to the Origin" (*Wanfa guizong* 万法归宗)—not to be confused with a book of the same title that deals with talismans and incantations.⁸ The text makes use

⁷ The narrative style of the ethnographical description used in this article might be the only suitable style, for restoring monk' diversity of activities and then placing monks' actions, serially piercing together. In the context of the slow pace of time in a monk's life.

⁸ A book of the same title and with the full name *Bichuan Wanfa Guizong* 秘傳萬法歸宗 is said to be a handbook on planchette writing (Despeux 2007b). It is

of special Daoist language, the internal language of the ritual arts. Among other things, it is about Dao. He is not sure how or when he first learned about this text. He received his copy was given to him by a monk he met in Sichuan, but had needed to, he could just as well have ordered it through the mail directly from Beijing Teachers College, known for its extensive stock on Buddhism and Daoism. The college has its own printing service and sells bound photocopied texts.

Yang has ordered other rare Daoist writings through the mail. It is sometimes possible to go through scientific and academic channels rather than Daoist temples. Even if the mail sometimes seem more practical, monks tend to obtain their texts in person and travel some distances for them. Since traveling forms an important part of apprenticeship, it is good to go to other temples to consult archives, libraries and shops, as well as to meet masters willing to share documents they have at their disposal. These “wanderings in the clouds” (*yunyou* 云游) are a chance to discover texts they never knew existed. But journeys take time and resources that Yang does not necessarily have when requiring a text.

There is a title printed in the header of the booklet, but no author’s name. One would have to be well-informed to know who wrote it, or perhaps it is not really important to know this. It is a contemporary version written in simplified Chinese (dated 1992) of a text whose author, according to Yang, is Li Chunfeng 李淳风, an eminent state teacher of the Tang and adviser to Emperor Taizong. A renowned mathematician, he also wrote tracts on divination.⁹

attributed by some publishers (Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, undated) to a certain Shanren 山人, or Man of the Mountain who, if the two characters of his name are contracted, could be called the Immortal (*xian* 仙), the name marked on the edge of the book but not inside. Yang assumes that the booklet in his possession and the book on talismans are two different texts, which I gathered was very likely the case when I read the book.

⁹ Li Chunfeng (602-670) is known for his affiliation with Daoism (Benn 2007, 633-34). According to Yang, he may have collaborated with Biao Tiangang on writing the “The Back Massage Table” (*Tuibei tu* 推背图). One would have looked after the text, the other the chart. However, it is difficult to know if this *Wanfa Guizong* was truly written by Li Chunfeng or if it has been falsely attributed to him, as has apparently been the case for other texts (see Anderson, 2007).

Yang points out that Li lived at the height of the Tang, an era when Daoism was highly developed; he would have been a member of the last generation of Lord Lao's disciples. But above all, Li is a kind of messenger, which explains why his name does not appear in (or on) the document. He merely reports on the method of Pengzu 彭祖, whose name is mentioned at the beginning of the text. The booklet's readers do not have to be reminded that Pengzu is the illustrious immortal, high officer and soothsayer the Shang dynasty (ca. 1765-1122 B.C.E.) (Kaltenmark 1987, 82-84; Sakade 2007, 790-91). The text in question is about his "secret method" (*mifa* 秘法),¹⁰ which includes Daoist ritual techniques and arts or magic of the highest order, at least higher than the practices of ordinary people. The text also reveals the meaning of Dao: this is what interests Yang most.

Why, with so many years of monastic life under his belt, is Yang taking this kind of interest in Dao? It is a basic notion, the "path to follow" sought by all Daoists, the fundamental principle at the heart of their religion, the source of everything. It is what every adept has to study first. However, not only is grasping Dao no easy task, since it has multiple levels of meaning, but understanding it is not enough: one has to reach Dao, cultivate it, win it, become it (since one can become what one seeks to attain).¹¹ And one has to work on it every day.

For now, Yang focuses on one aspect, its connection to the "Book of Changes" (*Yijing* 易经). He is working on a manuscript he calls "General Overview of Studies on the Changes" (*Yixue gailun* 易学概论). Taking Dao to be the source of the Changes (those that shape human beings as well as the universe), he tries to present a comprehensive analysis of it or, more exactly, he deals with the written character for "Dao", easier to understand than Dao itself said to be ineffable. His challenge is to approach Dao as simply as possible so that everyone can understand it, "so the people can follow Dao, and Dao can educate the people" he explains.

¹⁰ The full name of Pengzu's text in the document, is "Ten Thousand Methods to return to the Origin" (*Wanfa guizong mifa* 万法归宗秘法).

¹¹ Whereas for some Daoists, the body can become a "vessel" of the Dao (see Kohn 1989, 197), the monks at Wengongci temple speak more generally of obtaining the Dao (*dedao* 得道) or becoming Dao (*chengdao* 成道).

Yang is sitting perfectly still in his chair, his eyes riveted to the papers in his hands. He is immersed in the short text.

The booklet Yang has in his hands begins with a reminder: the great fundamental texts of Daoism like “Book of Dao and its Virtue” (*Daode jing* 道德經), warn those who would attempt to define them: “The Dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao; the name that can be named is not the eternal name” (ch. 1). And at the monastery, the rule stipulates silent teaching and recommends learning by observing (and imitating) the master more than taking the dialectical route. But, as Yang observes it, in order to approach Dao, one at least has to know what it is all about.

The booklet has supplied Yang with a judicious detour: he is deconstructing the character for *dao* as he would if he needed to spell it out, and attempting to decrypt the enigma it contains. Though Dao cannot have a name (*ming* 名), it has a written character (*zi* 字). Meticulously examining the graphical form of it is a legitimate way for Yang to take an interest in Dao and understand the search this entails.

In Daoism decipherment is sometimes a necessity, when one knows that the wording and even the terms themselves are considered to be encoded. And as Brigitte Baptandier notes, in China writing has a connection to the origin, like a “shifter,” so “it is a question of penetrating the secret of the meaning that has always been there, reading the universe’s signs in the written traces” (2008, 1). Therefore some individuals, including Daoist monks, are literally tasked, when the need arises, with “breaking writing open” or “dissect” (*chaizi* 拆字) (Bauer 1979; Baptandier 1991) or, as they say in Hanzhong, “probing” or “conjecturing” it (*cezi* 测字). In other words using glyphomancy.

Absorbed by the text, Yang raises the head and traces the character *dao* 道 in the air mechanically with his finger. He slowly draws its constituent lines, one by one. In the proper order. He starts from the right side, with the head *shou* 首, then adds the slow walk key *zuo* 亠 on the left. He counts aloud: twelve lines. He goes back to reading. The text endeavors to “deconstruct” (*chaijie* 拆解) the character even further.

The Character for "Dao"

To begin writing *dao* 道, first you draw two points [丶 丶], whose shape, when you hold it away, looks similar to "man" upside-down 人. One is on the left, the other is on the right: they signify yin and yang, masculine and feminine, one yin one yang, that is Dao.

[Since it is upside-down], the earth is above the man's head, while the sky is under his feet, it is precisely the Tai hexagram 泰. The upside-down human shape represents the backward walk [*daoxing nishi* 倒行逆施]. We who practice Daoist asceticism also know that "going against the tide is a fact of the immortal's life, following the current is the fact of an ordinary man's life."

Yang grabs a book, neatly covered with newspaper. Handwritten on the spine in red ink is the title *Yijing*. The reference is doubly implicit: the booklet quotes the famous phrase "One yin, one yang, that is Dao", from one of the appendices of the *Yijing* (*Xici shangbian*, 5) without mentioning the source, or even placing the citation between quotation marks as is often the case in these texts intended for experts. It references one of the hexagrams the *Yijing* analyzes. He does not hesitate to consult this old divination work, which he uses as a life manual, and as an automatism checks the hexagram Tai. He stops on the page that deals with the 11th hexagram, the three broken lines of Kun 坤 above the three full lines of Qian 乾, representing Earth over Heaven.

Yang skims over the paragraph that he well knows : Heaven placed beneath Earth signifies concord, the union of Earth and Heaven: "It is prosperity – the small departs and the great arrives." Further on, the commentary mentions that Tai represents the spontaneous (*ziran* 自然), the perfect harmony (*heshun* 和顺) of society when yin and yang are well positioned.¹² Yang continues reading.

¹² The next, 12th hexagram is its opposite: Heaven above and Earth below: "The big one goes and the small one arrives; this is stagnation," the moment when opposites do not communicate. The commentary explains that when yin and yang come apart, Heaven and Earth obstruct each other.

The One. “In the character *dao*, under the two points forming an upside-down man, there is the horizontal line of the “One” (*yi* 一) . . . The One is the beginning of numbers and represents a state of equilibrium, that practiced by the ascetic, who must have a well-balanced temperament [*pingheng tai* 平衡态] and achieve the equilibrium of no desire [*wuyu* 无欲].”

Next, he takes a pencil and starts annotating the text in the margin. Its argument becomes mathematical, as the monk details the relational systems. In Daoism, and more generally in Chinese thought, numbers occupy an essential place (Granet 1968, 127-29).

Does the Daoist myth of origins mentioned in the booklet not begin with a numeric formula? “Dao generates the One, the One generates the Two, the Two generates the Three, the Three generates the Ten Thousand Things” (*Daode jing* 42). Yang needs no exegesis. He knows the significance of these numbers: in this context, origins are associated with the power of Dao at the foundation of unity (the One), which is itself the creator of the two principles yin and yang (the Two), of Heaven, Earth, and Man (the Three) and everything else (the Ten Thousand Things).

The series of numbers does not end there. Next come the four emblems (*sixiang* 四象: red phoenix, green dragon, black tortoise, white tiger), the five phases (*wuxing* 五行: metal, wood, water, fire, earth), the six positions (*liuwei* 六位: ruler, minister, father, son, husband, wife), the seven rulers of seasons and time (*qizheng* 七政: sun, moon, five planets), the eight trigrams (*bagua* 八卦), the nine palaces (*jiugong* 九宫: forming a magic square), the ten directions (*shifang* 十方).

Glyphomancy belongs to the “number arts” (*shushu* 数术) and in this context, numbers are seen as special expressions of creative unity and involve particular calculations with their own rules, not always mathematical.¹³ For example, summing up two items enables unity to be obtained. In other words, the operation $1+1=1$ is possible.

The Self. “Under the two points and the horizontal line, there is the character *zi* 自, the self. It is the *zi* of *ziji* 自己, oneself; this is also the basis of the word *ziran* 自然, the very nature of things.”

¹³In this case, to use the words of Marcel Granet, one can say that numbers “evoke arrangements instead of totals.” (1968, 135).

In Daoism, working on the self should not mean being preoccupied with the self (or having a kind of "care of the self", to borrow the words of Michel Foucault), but rather forgetting the self (*wangwo* 忘我).¹⁴ But how does one work on oneself surrounded by other people, wrestling with the rules and constraints of the community?

At this moment, Yang seems to be in phase with what he is reading : most often, even doing other things or working, he applies himself to quietude (*qingjing* 清靜) that leads to the much-sought state of spontaneous nature *ziran*, the subject he is reading on. And it is sometimes difficult to gain it even within the monastery. Yet there, especially in an urban environment, life is not always restful. There are the other people, first one's brethren, then the laypeople. One has to compromise with the different individuals that make up the community, men and women from very diverse backgrounds. This heterogeneity can enrich the community, but it is also sometimes a source of tension between members.

For Yang, differences in cultural level are sometimes tougher than age differences. But as he clearly stresses, communal living is what makes it possible for monks to dedicate themselves to personal research and self-perfection; this is thanks to the fact that individually, they do not have to worry about subsistence or even preparing meals. The temple is still a public place, full of laypeople during the daytime. Monks are its guardians, and this places them at the interface between man's world and that of the gods. And their role as mediators and ritualists means their services are solicited from all corners. But unlike monks, laypeople do not consider reserve and tranquility their duty. They are even sometimes very internally agitated, and contact with them can cost the monks a lot of energy, or at least it can test their temperament, which is supposed to be as *yin* as possible.

The fact remains that even in a noisy environment, and regardless of whether there is an atmosphere of harmony or disagreement, ascetics have to be able to find inner peace and practice "self-perfecting through refinement" (*xiulian* 修炼), since this is the essential meaning behind these lines. The backward walk is nothing but a return (*fan* 反) toward

¹⁴ In this context, *zi* and *wo* are closely related. In the *Wanfa guizong*, *ziji* can include *zishen* (body, person) and *ziwo* (me), which one can see through a kind of introspection, after a long ascetic practice.

the state Before Heaven and the spontaneous nature of things. Returning to the origins means retracing one's steps, reintegrating the Ten Thousand Things into the Three, the Three into the Two, the Two into the One. Rediscovering this essential unity gives one hope of attaining Dao.

On the most cosmological level, it is a question of returning to what preceded the separation of the breaths and the creation of the universe. If this is transposed to the level of one's own body, the microcosm of the universe, then it is a question of asceticism: one must return from agedness to youth, rediscover a previously known state, somewhat like a fetus before birth. In his reading, Yang oscillates between these different significances.

The text does not stop here. It envisages all the cut-out possible of the character, as if each graphical component that can be isolated is necessarily part of the global meaning.

Mirror and Eye. "If we detail the character *zi* 自, we see that it is formed first by a 'cast' line [*yipie* 一撇, meaning a left-falling stroke]. This line is like a mirror reflecting light. It is also like the celestial vault covering the earth. It is about turning vision back upon the self [*huiguang fanzhao* 回光返照], illuminating one's body [*zishen* 自身].

"[Under the cast line, there is *mu* 目, which means 'eye']. Immortality is the fact of long vision (*jiushi* 久视). The eyes can see the light of the radiance. The eyes are the sun and moon. . . whose rays enable an ecological balance to be preserved on earth. . . The sun and moon of man play a similar role: they provide energy, this is what makes the two eyes useful. . . One can see one's own image (*xingxiang* 形象), that is the 'spirit of the valley' (*gushen* 谷神)."

Through asceticism, people no longer only look toward the outside, but contemplate the inner self with a view to perceiving the light each person has within, light being closely associated with vision in this context.¹⁵ When one has achieved this state of clairvoyance, one can see what one really is, one's own image, but also "the spirit of the valley," an expression from *Daode jing* 6 designating what is empty and immaterial,

¹⁵ The expression *huiguang fanzhao* 回光返照, designating inner practices, should be understood as directing one's eyes back onto one's inner radiance. Here light signifies vision. It is about keeping vision inside. When the spirit looks after its center, this signifies a return to inner radiance (Min and Li 1994, 455).

the virtue of Dao. The reasoning underlying this practice is at the heart of the text: "The Dao sought is not outside but within oneself."

Head and Leader. "The *shou* 首 element, the first, the head, the leader. *Shou* is that through which one understands Dao and that from which one attains Dao: it is the origin, the first or the One, the essential position; it is also man's head (*renshou* 人首), which enables understanding. It is the most important part of the body. It is commonly said: 'A man without a head cannot walk, a bird without a head cannot fly.' It is ultimately the ruler, the leader whom thought (*inyinian* 意念) enables to act. *Shou* again expresses the idea of the beginning. In the martial practices, it is important to begin at the beginning, the first step determines the course the practice will take. If one practices blindly (*mangxiu* 盲修), one cannot attain Dao."

The Slow Walk. "The idea of walking conveyed by the radical *zuó* 走 for 'slow walk' evokes the agility of the legs: if one only has the head but not the agility of the legs, one cannot walk. To be complete, man must have a head and legs. . . The walking key designates movement (*dong* 动), the head element designates motionlessness (*jing* 静). The head is related to Heaven, while the walk refers to Earth. *Shou* represents the inside, *zuó* represents the outside. If we only have the idea of asceticism, this is not enough. Practice is needed as well. It is important to simultaneously cultivate the inside and outside, yin and yang, the vital force and the body—this is what *dao* means taken as a whole."

Strictly speaking, Yang is not an expert in glyphomancy, which he sees as a Daoist divination technique along with fate calculation, drawing talismans, and incantatory spells. His application is simple and limited: he employs it to understand Dao in light of its ideogram.¹⁶

¹⁶ Others use glyphomancy as a reference during divination or fate calculation sessions. For example Zhu Liren in Hanzhong, a Daoist layman and friend of Yang is counted among the "fate calculation masters" (*suanming xiansheng* 算命先生). Zhu asks those who consult him to choose a character – either of their own initiative or by randomly placing their finger on the page of a book with their eyes closed. By analyzing this written sign through the deconstruction of lines and elements, he offers an answer to the petitioner's problem. Yang does not use this method during consultations. He only uses it in the context of research.

What is Daoism if not yin and yang, the return movement or that of the upside-down man, the search for primordial unity or for the One, vision turned in upon the self, the backward walk, the body and spirit considered together, the self and the spontaneous nature of things? Years of study and practice are often needed to understand it, and yet it is right under our eyes, written succinctly in the word *dao*, condensed into the twelve lines used to draw it. This secret is mainly transmitted by word of mouth, even though some have endeavored to put it into writing with a view to propagating knowledge that, for Yang, has not only been invaluable, but life-saving.

Saved by Culture

This work requires a literate practitioner. Yang is one but not owe this to his family. He was born in 1937. As he likes to recall, this was the year of the Lugou bridge incident, also known as the Marco Polo Bridge, southwest of Beijing, the clash between Chinese and Japanese soldiers that set off the Sino-Japanese conflict during the World War II.

His early childhood was spent in Liuba in northern Shaanxi. From a working-class background, he did not stay in school very long. He deeply regrets this. Nevertheless, he obtained a primary school certificate, and he was able to complete two years of middle school. But then economic realities caught up with him. His peasant parents were too poor to continue financing his education, so he had to leave the classroom and start working. He did not receive any professional training and cultivated the soil like his older brother, but did not give up learning. Since he was lucky enough to know how to read and write, he continued studying on his own. He now considers himself a perfect autodidact. He says that even much later, when he had a master, he learned nothing from him. But he is extremely grateful to his master for having given him the opportunity to study alone in his cell, almost as much as he wished.

It is not unusual to hear a Daoist monk say that he learned nothing from his master. Is it because teaching is ideally done without words that he has this impression? Is this not just a way of keeping the secret? If his master did not verbally explain what Dao was but showed it to him or made him aware of it through readings at services, could it not be said that his master taught it to him? Does silent transmission count? And as

he says himself, his master Zhang Mingshan categorically refused to transmit his medical knowledge beyond his immediate disciples.

Yang and his master were in fact very different. Zhang was a monk most of his life, having entered religion as an adolescent in Sichuan.¹⁷ He was forced renounce monasticism during the Cultural Revolution, but did not marry.¹⁸ This enabled him to resume life as a monk as soon as it became possible, and he spearheaded the reestablishment of monasteries in the Hanzhong region. He was not a man of letters. In fact he was practically illiterate. He had little culture, but this did not mean he was ignorant. He knew a lot about Daoism, and was especially good at treating patients, so laypeople traveled great distances to consult him.

Yang spent only a few years at his master's side, at a time when the cult resurgence was in its early stages and there was a lot of work to be done. They needed to concentrate on the most practical aspect of the phenomenon: rebuilding razed monasteries and renovating temples that had been requisitioned during the total ban on religious activities and the subsequent campaigns against "superstition" in the Maoist period. In the beginning, monks had little time to dedicate to Dao and meditation. They had to focus on getting authorization to reopen holy places, reclaiming land (sometimes involving a tug-of-war with the local authorities), rewriting and promoting local history, summoning back specialists in religious architecture, setting up and overseeing construction sites, and securing finances for the work and managing with the State Taoist Association (Daojiao xiehui 道教协会) of which they have to be members.

Yang and his master may have seen little of each other, but some experiences clearly mark him, such as the practical teachings of medicine. Most of the time he does not apply the same treatments as the Daoists who are regarded as doctors, who take the patient's pulse, conduct a

¹⁷ Zhang, who took the cloth before the Cultural Revolution and became an "old-timer" by returning to monastic life after prohibition, entered Daoism at Jinding guan in the 1940s, one of the few Daoist temples on Mount Emei, Sichuan.

¹⁸ He remained alone in the mountain temple during the Cultural Revolution. He did not renounce his monastic life, although he had to conceal it for a few years. He would come down every day and devote himself to work in the ricefields, to comply with government rulings that required him to give up his religious activities in favor of another (more useful) career.

medical examination and question the patient about his health.¹⁹ When people come to consult Yang, he calculates their fate (*suanming* 算命), and depending on the result, he might decide to use medicines, which he prepares himself and combines with written talismans.²⁰ On a piece of yellow paper he draws a talisman suitable for the pain or evil detected. Either he folds this over the medicine and orders the patient to carry the folded paper with him a certain amount of time, or he burns the talisman, mixes its ashes into the medication, dilutes the mixture in boiled water, and gives the patient the beverage to drink. In this case, the written words are not made for reading but – incorporated by the patient – serve to protect him or even heal him (see Baptandier 1994).

In retrospect, he stresses the importance of culture, the kind of culture that is difficult to acquire when one has had little education, but without which one cannot attain immortality – the kind of culture that saved him. According to Yang, this is needed to study Dao: “Without knowledge of cosmological thought, one cannot understand what the quest for Dao entails. There are Daoist monks who know neither why they are there, nor why they are studying Dao. They are unable to explain Dao. They play it by ear; they advance without any clear reference points. They have fallen into error.”

Yang says one cannot move forward if one does not know what one is searching for. But can one really know what one is seeking? For him, acquiring knowledge is essential, and in his case it is done through book learning.²¹ This is why he did his own reading. Having said that, some

¹⁹ With regard to the medical text, “The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic: Simple Questions” (*Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素文), Schipper explains that “the mythical view of the body in Daoism served as a reference for the art of medicine” (1982, 167). On the use of medicine by monks today, see Liu 2008.

²⁰ “Talismans consist of stylized characters, figurative elements, geometrical patterns and symbolic signs, drawn in close combination to create a powerful. Intricate mixture” (Despeux 2004, 533).

²¹ This is also suggested by some Daoist hagiographies, which say that study and personal effort could lead to a long life. Benjamin Penny recalls the debate “that resounds through the history of immortality, namely whether the ability to gain this exalted state was dependent on the fate one received at birth (length of life was, and to some extent still is, regarded as fated) or whether im-

can still go far without making use of books, but these are rare. His master is an example: he is considered destined for immortality, given his accumulation of merits.

Fated toward Dao

Yang himself works hard toward immortality. Although these days he no longer engages in seated meditation or breathing exercises, his research contributes to his progress one way or another. He has a great sense of urgency. In fact, he has to make up for lost time, because he came late to the monastery, "halfway down the road" (*banlu chujia* 半路出家), to use the monks' own expression.²² He arrived there only in his fifties after having had a family and working for long years in a regular profession. He lost a lot of energy during his life as a layman, energy that he will not be able to dedicate to his asceticism. Since he was educated and lively, he was probably quicker to take up work than his brethren, for whom, for example, Daoist texts were inaccessible, or for whom learning to read the scriptures aloud meant learning reading itself.

Life did not spare him. He would say it is just fate, which has its share of sadness. The playwright Aziz Chouaki would say "Quand elle est gifle la vie!" or "When life is a slap in the face." After quitting school, Yang worked the fields with his parents for a while before joining the army. He was sent to Guangxi, where he quickly climbed the hierarchical ladder and became a marshal. He got married at age twenty and soon his wife gave birth to two children, a boy and a girl. Then misfortune struck: he lost both children to illness when they were little more than ten years old. His marriage did not survive the ordeal and ended in divorce: his wife left him.

mortality was something that anybody could attain given the right information, sufficient study and apparently boundless enthusiasm" (2007, 42-43).

²² Becoming a monk. In the Chinese context in Daoism and Buddhism literally means "leaving one's family/home" (*chujia* 出家). The possibility of leaving home halfway down the road had been embodied in Wang Chongyang himself, founder of the Quanzhen monastic order, who exhorted his disciples to "leave their children" (*beizi* 别子) and "reject their wives" (*xiuqi* 休妻). To devote themselves to practicing asceticism, as he did (Marsone 2001, 354).

He remarried, but his pain increased instead of abating and disappearing. His relationship with his second wife was ruined. He still feels resentment. He laments that her character should have made her so difficult to live with. He even implies that her problems were pathological. And then there was her child from a previous marriage, who would not listen to a word he said and roundly refused to obey him. His wife did not give him much credit or take very good care of him. She mostly looked after herself. He acknowledges that he went through a rough patch himself at this time.

Having reached midlife, an age when one comes to understand the twists and turns of human existence, Yang had a nervous breakdown. He also fell physically ill. On top of all this he succumbed to alcoholism. It was all the more difficult to struggle against this addiction in China, where one rarely has to drink alone; one drinks throughout meals when a third party is present, every time someone lifts his glass. And participation in dinking games is a matter of politeness at dinner parties.

He entered religion in order to put a stop to this decline. He and his second wife had had no children, so he was free of parental responsibility. As he says himself, it was either then or never. Already in his fifties, he would soon have been too old to be accepted as a disciple and “get through the door” (*jinmen* 进门). A passionate reader, Yang learned the benefits he could derive from asceticism from the *Yijing* and Daoist books. He made his way to a Daoist temple to improve himself and to serve society, finding a quiet place conducive to meditation. This in turn help him to understand his weaknesses, and make him work to correct them.

He left his wife to go to Mount Tiantai in southern Shaanxi or did he go to Tiantai to leave his wife? But their paths did not diverge completely. His ex-wife followed his example a year later and entered a monastery herself: maybe she was in need of solitude, maybe life had become materially difficult without a man at her side, maybe Yang's path impressed her, or maybe a combination of these. In China it is not unusual to have serial vocations in a family. Sometimes several family members decide to enter religion at intervals of only a few years. Regulations allow it, on condition that they take separate paths as much as possible and agree to change the terms of their relationship. As Yang's wife

found a female master in a nearby temple, the two continued to meet or see each other, but things were no longer as they used to be. They had changed their name, and were now "brothers in apprenticeship" (*shixiong/di* 师兄/弟). The marital link that had united them transformed into a ritual kinship. Furthermore, the fundamental gender difference was erased, since the monastery rules require nuns to call each other by the same masculine names used between men – in order to favor group unity and promote the ascetic's search for the One.²³ As their brethren, if they had now to use yang appellations, they also need to adopt yin temperaments: those usually considered feminine, like tranquility, reserve... They could then, each in their own way, endeavor to transform their metabolism through asceticism, using the techniques proper to each gender.

Explaining his vocation, Yang speaks of a kind of predetermined affinity for the monastery (*yuanfen* 缘分) joined by the desire to be useful to society at some point in his life. Yang was motivated to enter religion after reading the *Yijing*. As he recalls, the role and application of this work is part of a large sphere that could also encompass astronomy, geography, climatology, agriculture, commerce, the art of war, as well as asceticism. It provided a bridge between his military and Daoist careers. As Yang points out: "Daoist *yuanfen* means getting back to a spontaneous nature, uniting with it, getting in tune with it and teaching it to each other. It is about not resisting 'the course of things.'"

Community Service

Yang has just about finished reading six pages in the booklet when someone knocks on the door. He calls out distractedly: "Come in." A woman of about fifty. In a fur coat with hair slicked back and rolled up into a finely-combed bun, she sticks her head in and stammers a few polite words before saying she has come for a fate calculation session. He answers with a big smile, and tells her to have a seat.

²³When Yang had to introduce his ex-wife, he would say "she is my brother in apprenticeship." Yang addressed her as "younger brother" since she entered the monastery after him. On sublimating gender to better manage yin and yang, see Herrou 2001a; on ritual kinship in Daoism, see Herrou 2005, ch. IX.

A young woman, dressed in the latest fashion and made up ostentatiously, slips through the half-open door; the two women have come to see him about her marriage. They have arrived unexpectedly, like most laypeople who come to the temple. Few make appointments, except for important rituals, which are planned a day or two in advance. Although technically Daoists do not perform weddings or birth rituals, marriage is still one of the most common subjects laypeople come to discuss. They often request an assessment of the compatibility of the spouses' fates and ask for this to be optimized or desire help in choosing an auspicious date.

Yang's visitors have explained the reason for their visit: the young woman is engaged to a man who is apparently from a good family, but has shown signs of weak health. They briefly introduce the story's protagonists without saying too much. They are consulting with a soothsayer, after all, who should be able to see things for himself. It is their first time meeting him, on a recommendation from a friend. He asks for the future spouses' dates of birth but not if her fiancé approved of this sort of process. This is how it goes when calculating fate: whoever has someone else's birth date and hour can ask to have that person's fate calculated with their consent, behind their back, or even against their will. The young woman tells him, not without apprehension. After noting this information along with his visitors' telephone numbers, he explains that he uses the "four pillars of destiny" (*sizhu* 四柱) method and asks them to return the following day after he has calculated their fates.

He does not rise from his chair right away. The laypeople take out some money. He refuses at first, but ends up accepting it and sliding it into his drawer. He sees his guests to the door, where they thank him again and assure him they can easily find the way out on their own.

The temple bell rings. It is noon. Through the window, a mixture of monks and workmen can be seen rushing toward the kitchen. Yang takes his bowl and chopsticks and joins his brethren on the first patio. Many of them have chosen to eat lunch outside, taking advantage of the sunshine, which is becoming scarce as autumn advances. He serves himself from the two enormous metal bowls on the kitchen table – one full of rice, the other full of finely-chopped vegetables – and takes a seat at one of the courtyard's immovable tables.

He has not taken monk disciples yet, and not all Daoist masters necessarily do so. Up until then, he had only accepted a few lay disciples, either because he felt he had not reached a sufficient level to transmit his knowledge, or because he had not met the right candidate. Moreover, at the Wengongci, most newcomers take the monastery abbot as master and it is particularly visible in the present time, when few of them care of his lunch, bring it to his cell and ensure on his health. Yang eats by his own. Nobody seems to keep a special eye on him except the cook who refills his bowl, with an authoritative gesture, ignoring the monk's words of refusal. Conversations are lively, two monks share a joke, the ambience is "hot and noisy" (*renao* 热闹), as a welcoming temple should be in China.

After the meal, Yang goes back to his cell and lies down his bed. Although he has a great interest for the booklet, he prefers to have a short rest. He knows the necessity of taking care of his body and he is also aware that man's knowledge is necessarily limited. Laozi did not say: "Renounce study and you will be free from sorrows" (*Daode jing* 20)? But, on the opposite of certain brethren, Yang does not feel the need to stop reading, either temporarily or indefinitely in a kind of literary fast, so that he could dedicate himself completely to the ascetic practice of self-cultivation (Herrou 2007, 191). Maybe, he has not reached this stage yet or has surpassed it.

An hour later, he comes out his cell and stops for a few moments on the second patio to help an older monk scrape a few old red bricks that are to be reused. He crouches down and silently inspects the bricks, verifying that they are reusable, before grabbing a stone and starting to scrape away the cement residue, somewhat clumsily.

Reconstruction

Since reopening its doors in 1993, and even since its land was first returned to the Daoist community after the Cultural Revolution, the temple has been a permanent construction site. There are periods when the workmen (who are housed and fed at the temple) outnumber monks, and times when the monks do whatever work they can manage on their own a few months, until they accumulate enough money to launch more projects. For now, it is time for heavy work on the building's skeleton.

When the head of construction arrives, he does not seem at all surprised to find Yang participating in this kind of work even though he is in charge of planning the Jade Emperor's Pavilion. Yang asks him if he has eaten, and then, without listening to his answer, gets up to inspect the work with him. Wengongci Temple was not destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. It was requisitioned and transformed into a housing complex. When it was returned to Daoist community in the late 1980s, Yang was one of those selected by his master to assist the new abbot in managing restoration and reopening.

Having been involved in the reconstruction from the very beginning, he has seen a first patio being built in the old vegetable garden as former residents gradually vacated the premises, followed by a second patio being enlarged. Now the Jade Emperor's Pavilion is being rebuilt. The monks are not restoring what was left of the old eponymous structure. It was torn down so that a new one could be built, which will not be two stories high like before, but four, so that the temple can grow.²⁴ The topmost floors are almost finished, the cornices at the tips of the swallow-winged roof are already ornamented with finely-painted motifs, like the yin-yang diagram and other bright designs. The ground floor in contrast, is wide open: with no floor or exterior walls, it looks like an empty space under an unfinished ceiling, delimited by supporting concrete beams and covered by scattered piles of materials. Three workmen and a monk are playing cards in a corner. Yang laughs with his young brethren as they pass by.

²⁴ Since it was reopened at the beginning of the late 1990's, Wengongci Temple has become the local office of the State Daoist Association. It was consequently to receive new responsibilities and a higher status. This promotion in the official hierarchy has markedly contributed to the changes in its configuration. Monks themselves speak of a wish to pursue what their predecessors have started, and to try to go further. At least they don't want historical events, and time, to have a too strong hold on Daoist transmission.

Healing Rituals

Yang's meeting with the workmen is interrupted by the monk in charge of the ritual schedule. He has come to fetch him for a healing. They need him to "set up a Daoist ritual area" (*ban daochang* 办道场). In charge of the sick person's family, Yang will calculate their fates while other monks perform the ritual. In addition, he also prepares the ritual documents to be presented to the gods. They will be burned during the ceremony so that their requests can reach the divinities. To this end, he goes to his cell, takes out some yellow rice paper and sits down to compose the formal petition. After that, he takes more paper plus scissors and glue to build a casket about 40 cm or 16 inches in height to hold the documents. After placing the documents inside, he draws a talisman on its top to make sure it has the proper ritual potency.

His task does not end there. After the ritual is concluded and before the sacred area is dissolved, he has to take the laypeople aside for a divination, asking the divinities present: "Will the ritual be fruitful? Will it be effective?" To this end, he gives them a set of divining blocks, a pair of wooden objects shaped like oyster shells, each with a flat and a rounded side.²⁵ He asks the laypeople to throw these on the ground: if both rounded sides face up, the answer is negative; if both flat sides are up, the answer is uncertain; if they land with one flat and one rounded showing up, the answer is positive.

Every day at the temple, a large number of people come looking for Yang Zhixiang. He assesses the seriousness of their situation and chooses the most effective means to remedy it. Not every situation necessitates a formal ritual. "For example, if it concerns fate (*yunqi* 运气), if there are things that people want but are unable to do, and this is very difficult for them, then we arrange for a rite. Also, there are those who are suffering from evil spirits who have attached themselves to them (*chanshen* 缠身), so a *daochang* is needed to exorcise them. Then there are people who experience adversity, are subject to misfortune, have family problems, or lots of other things. There are also those who are unable to have children,

²⁵ These ritual objects are sometimes called *beijiao* 杯琰 or *jiaobei* 琰杯 but Yang Zhixiang prefers to call them *gua* 挂, pointing out that there are different types made of wood, metal, or stone.

but in that case we do not create a ritual area. If it is a matter of illness and the sick person's condition is serious, if a child is not healing or medications from the hospital are having no effect, then we may do a ritual. If the medications work, it is not needed." Monks often resort to fate calculation as well as physiognomy (*kanxiang* 看相), the art of learning about a person through his facial appearance, to determine how serious what kind of problem is and what remedies might be required.

Before he even completes the first task, new laypeople are already knocking on his door. He asks them to wait. He needs time to meet the sick person's relatives so the ritual can begin. A line quickly forms in front of his cell. A young monk in his probationary period who does not participate in the ritual suggests that the visitors have a seat on stools in the courtyard. He serves them tea in plastic cups until Yang can attend to their needs.

Fate Calculation

Night has fallen. Yang lowers the large wooden beam that secures the double doors at the entrance. He has just walked the last laypeople to their bicycles, parked in the narrow street running the length of the temple. The monks are on their own again, until tomorrow morning. Or, to borrow Claude Lévi-Strauss's words, they "keep to themselves" (1969, 497). The dinner bell has rung. After a quick meal, Yang drops in on the nun in charge of finances to give her the money from the laypeople, then he returns to his cell. He still has to calculate their fate.

He tears a sheet from a pad of white paper and positions it vertically. In the top-right corner he writes the names and phone numbers of the two women with a red felt pen, then draws a rough rectangle around it. In black ink, he writes the word for "man" on the left side and that for "woman" on the right, so the sheet is divided in two. Underneath, for each fiancé, he writes their day and time of birth. Consulting the almanac, he converts this information into the traditional eight characters, the year, month, day, and hour of birth (the four pillars) in the symbols of the sexagenary cycle.

For each fiancé, he consults the page dedicated to his/her birth year and reports the sign pairs corresponding to the year, the month and the day of birth (through the combination of the two decimal and duodeci-

mal series, the ten celestial stems and the twelve earthly branches). Then he consults a small manual he created for himself. In which he has transcribed, among other things, the birth time correspondence table. Thus he obtains eight characters for each of the future spouses which, to use Brigitte Baptandier's terms, are "a kind of encryption of the chart of the universe" (1996, 123).

He then calculates each fiancé's fate, noting it in two columns—black ink for "great fate" (*dayun* 大运), the major changes that will occur in each ten-years period, and red ink to mark "future fate" (*liunian yun* 流年运), main annual tendencies for the next few years.²⁶ He also compares the eight characters in terms of mutual harmony and repulsion (*xianghe/chong* 相合/冲). As it turns out, the fiancés have a compatible fate: Firstly, considering the eight characters, the woman was born in the year of the Rooster, which falls under the earthly branch *yu* 酉, and the man, whose eight characters are placed under the sign of the Dragon, corresponds to the *chen* 辰 sign.

Yu and *chen* are in concordance, both being associated with the metal in the five elements and that is fundamental, as Yang stresses, since "to live together, two people really have to be in harmony so that they can be considerate and kind toward one another, feel close and love each other, help each other." Secondly, examining fates, certain combinations are most certainly lucky and that is the case today, as for the *dayun*: since the woman carries the sign of the Mandarin norm (*guanyun* 官运), which (in a man's fate) refers to the spouse, and the man has the sign of wealth (*caiyun* 财运) in his fate, which symbolizes the spouse.²⁷ Yang now knows that they could live in harmony for a long time and the marriage is likely to be fruitful. A study of the *liunian yun* will determine the most auspicious date on which to celebrate the union.

²⁶ The first ten-year period of the "great fate" does not start at birth but at the year from which the person's fate would have begun, a date that Yang has quickly calculated, according to another table in his personal manual.

²⁷ In this context, *guan* and *cai* are complex notions, which translation cannot sufficiently convey. On their symbolical meaning (when *guan/cai* can correspond to what governs a person/that to which he is opposed) and on the kinship and alliance relationship systems they reflect, see Baptandier 2003, 122-23.

The sheet of paper is almost completely covered with writing (in red and black), writing that laypeople would not be able to understand, even though this is the sheet Yang gives them and it holds the answer to their question. They will only grasp a few details out of everything marked there: the corresponding celestial stems and earthly branches will remain nothing but numbers, though some characters might give some slight information about the contents of an element. Looking at what is written on this page, Yang would be able to report several things to the young woman about her own fate, about that of the man she hopes to marry, and about their union. In all likelihood, the result will not be a source of discord but rather something that opens the doors to the wedding ceremony. Yang is relieved; this kind of answer is easier to give than its opposite. Because a suanming master's power is limited.

Still, he is aware that he can suggest only so much. "In fate (*ming yun* 命运)," he says, "there is the part on which one can act (*yun*, good and bad fortune) and another about which nothing can be done (*ming*, life's destiny). Even then, some *yun* remains impervious to all attempts of change." Not to mention the fact that people themselves have a measure of responsibility for how they conduct their lives.²⁸ For example, on the subject of fate at the time of marriage (*hunyun* 婚运), Yang explains that there are people who are made for marriage, others who belong to a kind of resistance (and therefore encounter the difficulties of widowhood, remarriage or bigamy) and still others for whom nothing can be done, about whose problems suanming masters remain totally powerless, and whose only option is celibacy, or, if they are believers, the monastery path.²⁹

²⁸ On the belief in both people's responsibility for their fate and their inborn qualities (or a "destiny") directing their lives and deeds, see Kohn 2007a, 99.

²⁹ As is well-known in anthropology, marriage is above all about families putting matrimonial strategies and established societal rules into play, and these go far beyond the mere consent of the spouses (Lauwaert 1991, 144-70; Wolf 1974a; 1974b; Watson 1986). It is often "a kind of corporate activity reflective of more than family (*jia*) interests," as Susan Naquin says (1986, 226). But often horoscopes also end up intervening to qualify the designated parties for marriage. And dramatic events can occur among cosmically antagonistic or deadly couples — mother and daughter, spouses (Topley 1955; 1974; Lauwaert 2001).

Yang himself is working hard on changing his own temperament. He does everything he can to turn the bad thoughts that still sometimes enter his head into virtuous ones. He also tries to be as helpful to others as much as possible. This is not something he speaks about openly since, to use his own terms, this would amount to tooting his own horn and ultimately giving a poor impression of Daoist monks. However, if someone asks for his help, he will give it.

It is ten o'clock. Practically asleep on his feet, he finally can go to bed. He tries to empty his mind since the work of telling fortunes is a source of tension. He knows this and experiences it every day; not every truth—or at least not every prediction—is nice. Some visitors are reduced to tears, others fly into a rage. Many say nothing, but they are no less affected. Yang himself sometimes feels a certain pain for the people who come to him. Though many laypeople believe the words of the fortune-teller or, if skeptical, are prepared to experiment with his verdict, there are people who are afraid of his potential clairvoyance. Like Ji Xian in the *Zhuangzi*, "he was able to predict each person's future, life and death, happiness and misfortune, success and failure, premature death and long life. None of this was a secret to him and he could announce the exact date on which events would take place, like a genie. People fled at his sight" (ch. 7).

Epilogue

It has now been a decade since this day took place. Since then, construction of the Jade Emperor's pavilion is complete. Wengongci has expanded further. Yang's master, Zhang Mingshan, passed away "transformed into a bird" (*yuhua* 羽化). A statue of him represented as a god or an immortal was recently unveiled at the temple. But also since then, Yang has left Wengongci after a serious disagreement with the abbot.

A local doctor helped him find modest lodgings in the area and he lived there with his ex-wife, who followed his example for the second time, until their disagreements caught up with them again. Then he moved several times, searching for an environment conducive to his Daoist and literary activities. He continued living off his fortune-telling while searching for a new temple. First he returned to Mount Tiantai to serve his old master and lived in a temple not far from him. Only one of

two monks there, he had to share domestic chores like bringing water from the valley and had little time for his passion. So he left. Then he spent some time in a small temple in the south of Xi'an, but had trouble getting along with his superior who was thirty years his junior.

Next, he fought hard to obtain authorization to move into the famous Zhang Liang Temple, now a museum managed by the municipal Department of Culture. He liked it especially since it was located near his hometown in Liuba county. But his relationship with the local authorities was complicated. He finally put an end to his wanderings and settled in a tenement in Hanzhong. He resolved to live alone, but then a young woman joined him as his disciple. For a while she helped with his consultations and learned his Dao, then they fell in love. They are still together today, even though, as he said, things are not always easy, especially for someone whose fate is not favorable to marriage. He has cut his hair and gone back to using his layman's name to symbolize that he is no longer a monk. He explains that he simply changed to another Daoist discipline, to reconcile the conjugal and liturgical elements of life,³⁰ and decided to remain what he is: a Daoist master who still wears his blue cotton vest and receives laypeople in large numbers, mainly to calculate their fates.

³⁰ After considering the Shangqing order, he opted for Zhengyi where masters have always been permitted to marry and sometimes, when their office is hereditary, are even obliged to do so to perpetuate their charge. If Yang was vague on the subject, it is probably because he could be a self-appointed Zhengyi master.

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Forum

on

Contemporary

Practice

Psychology and Daoism

Resisting Psychologization—Assisting Dialogue

ELLIOT COHEN

Daoism must not allow itself to be merely harvested for its psychological insights whilst having the rest of its fields declared fallow.

This paper, I hope, performs three functions: summarize my presentation at the International Daoism Conference on Mount Wudang in June, 2009; reflect on some of the other papers delivered in the session on “Psychology and Daoism;” and introduce the aims and objectives of the newly founded Northern Institute of Daoist Studies. My conference paper highlighted some potential pitfalls which may await any dialogue between Daoism, psychology, and psychotherapy. I was delighted to receive a complimentary copy of conference presenter Lü Xichen’s publication *Daoxue jianxin zhihui* 道学健心智慧 (Daoist Wisdom and Mental Health, 2008), which explores parallels and interactions between Daoism and different psychotherapeutic approaches.

My paper also explored which domains of psychology and psychotherapy were beginning to lay claim to and compete for Daoism, notably analytic psychology (Rosen 1997), cognitive-behavioral therapy (Young, Zhou and Zhu 2008), and humanistic approaches (Johanson and Kurtz 1994). Rather than serve as a complete analysis and evaluation of these attempts at synthesis leading to the creation of a Daoist psychology or psychotherapy I would like to take a step back and consider some important factors that must precede such an endeavor.

To me, Daoism represents a rich and varied tradition, a historically and culturally located collection of philosophies, liturgies, ethical teachings, meditative methodologies, ritual practices, and cultivation exercises

(Kohn 2001). Daoism does not reduce into neat little Western packages such as “philosophy” or “psychology” irrespective of how internally diverse these disciplines may be. Any dialogue with Daoism must accordingly take into account the depth and breadth of the tradition.

Psychology

Psychology is variously defined as a “science of the mind,” and/or as a “study of human behavior” by such national bodies as the British Psychological Society (BPS), American Psychological Association (APA), Australian Psychological Society (APS), and Chinese Psychological Society (CPS). The appearance that these various organizations are keen to maintain, under the overall auspices of the International Union of Psychological Science, is that psychology is ‘scientific’ and relatively unified in its vision and purpose.

In contrast, psychology is far from being a unified discipline; in fact one of the things that excites me most about psychology is its multi-paradigmatic character. The etymology of ‘Psychology’ reveals that its initial focus was the human *psyche*, translated as soul, spirit, or even breath. The goddess Psyche herself was originally a mortal woman whose love of, and relationship with, the god Eros led to her own ascension into the ranks of the divine Olympian hierarchy (Lowenthal 2004), and her transformation from mortal to immortal may excite some speculation among Daoist practitioners.

One of the earliest arguments against the existence of a “science” of psychology, well articulated by Galileo, was that the human soul/mind could not be measured in any meaningful way (Hergenhahn 2000). He is often presented as an early empiricist and quoted as saying: “measure what can be measured and make measurable what is not so.” This statement typifies the earliest forms of experimental psychology students often believe is the origin of modern psychology (rather than recognizing its roots in theology, philosophy or even mythology).

Beginning in the University of Leipzig laboratory of Wilhelm Wundt, psychology came to be understood as a science that observes and measures (Rieber and Robinson 2001). His *Outlines of Psychology* published in 1897, presents psychology as a positivistic and nomothetic endeavor, moving away from metaphysical speculation or subjective

relativism. It is perhaps significant that one of the commonly identified founders of Chinese psychology, Cai Yuanpei, attended and studied with Wundt and consequently set up his own laboratory in Beijing in 1917 (Jing 1994).

Several years before Wundt's book, William James set forth his "Principles of Psychology" (1890), which presented a more phenomenological and experiential approach to psychology, emphasizing consciousness and using expressions such as "stream of thought." James's later work, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," soon became a classic in the study of religion and spirituality, using phenomenological inquiry as its main methodology (1983). It is still much cited today.

Also around this time, a young and promising psychiatrist by the name of Sigmund Freud took a keen interest in Jean-Martin Charcot's work concerning hysteria (becoming, for some time, his student), and devoted much time to the case of one particular patient, referred to as Anna O (whom Freud never actually met), who was under the care of Joseph Breuer (see Jones 1974). The patient presented symptoms of hysterical paralysis (as well as several other symptoms), which appeared to be alleviated by a "talking cure," i.e., by talking about the nature and exploring the possible origins of her illness. Freud duly developed psychoanalysis, a profound hermeneutic methodology or "depth psychology," which was deeply enmeshed in language, the dance of interpretation. It also included a profound appreciation of the relationship between body and mind; pioneering psychosomatic approaches within medicine. This also included the insight that some physical symptoms might have "psychogenic" roots; with their origins in our thoughts, or in what we refuse to think, and in words, or what we cannot bring ourselves to say. His theory concerning the sexual etiology of hysteria, though controversial at the time, also served to emphasize the potent psychological and physiological impact of the libidinal drives; again highlighting the bidirectional nature of mind-body. In addition to discussing consciousness, Freud raised the level of understanding to the reality and dynamics of the unconscious.

Today undergraduate degree programs present the field as divided into three main forces: psychoanalysis or psychodynamics, the Freudian model, behaviorism, an extension of the experimental, empirical model that takes the measurement, prediction, modification and control of be-

havior as its main objectives; and humanism, a reaction against the perceived “reductionistic,” “determinist” approaches of the behaviorists, that sought to emphasize individual autonomy and return to more person centered, dialogical ways of being and relating. More recently a forth force, the transpersonal, has emerged, mainly based on the work of Abraham Maslow (1994). It recognizes the spiritual dimension of the humanities as integral to our being, containing potent transformative potentials that facilitate forms of socio-cultural-spiritual evolution (see McIntosh 2007).

In addition there are two further important approaches: the neurological, which reduces consciousness to brain structure, function and electrochemical signals or “neural correlates of consciousness” NCC); and the cognitive, which represents consciousness as a complex, interweaving series of processing systems similar to computer programs with their various procedures, filters and subroutines.

If psychology is to enter into a meaningful dialogue with Daoism, then, which school, approach, or type of psychology is most suited to the task? There is as yet no such thing as “Daoist psychology” or “Daoist psychotherapy.” Chinese psychology itself is a Western import (Jing 1994), being resisted and assimilated at different times, often for varying political reasons. On the other hand, there is already an established category called “Buddhist psychology,” which may serve as an interesting precedent.

Buddhist Psychology

The Guildford Press catalogue of books on “Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry 2009” dedicates a page and a half to “mindfulness based” approaches and practices. Often semiotically suggested in the books’ front covers that often show lotus flowers and other tranquil, Orient-evoking scenes, Buddhist-based mindfulness has become associated with various psychological theories and interventions. The most recent and popular is the combination of cognitive based psychotherapeutic approaches (CBT) with mindfulness or Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (Kabat-Zinn 1990; Williams et al. 2007).

Western psychology rests largely upon the ontological assertion that there is such an entity as the “self,” which Buddhism asserts,

through meditative and experiential means, is not real in any permanent or integral sense. This inherent contradiction between the two approaches has remained a subject of fascination without satisfactory resolution.

Clearly there are recognizable resonances between Buddhism and psychotherapy. Both have at their hearts the wish to reduce, or eradicate and transcend, human suffering. Clinical psychologists and psychotherapists see Buddhism as a secular spirituality, primarily concerned with human suffering (Watson et al. 2000) rather than as a living religious tradition. The West has sponsored something like a Buddhist Reformation, often with the apparent blessing of the native custodians and propagators, so that Buddhist monks are placing themselves willingly in fMRI scanners and have their meditative prowess measured and explained in terms of brain structure, function, and electrochemistry (Goleman 2003). Thus neurology allied with psychology seeks to "demystify" and catalogue the Buddhist brain, moving from cultivating the dharma to increasing dendritic connections (Hanson and Mendius 2009).

We all desire to be happy, but Buddhism is not really concerned with creating happiness in the ordinary sense. Even in Tibetan Buddhism the yogi may only appear to be living and pursuing an ordinary life with a job, wife, and family while in fact pursuing higher spiritual goals. The Buddha addressed "suffering and the cessation of suffering," understanding the pursuit of happiness in this world as the key of all problems (Rahula 1997). He taught that in the eyes of the awakened, the very things people consider the source of happiness are seen what they actually are: the root of misery (Dhammika 2009).

Buddhist teachings popular in the West tend to be less concerned with renunciation and more with embracing life and seeking personal fulfillment. The immediacy of mindfulness, free of any religious or cultural baggage or ethical requirements, may be seductive but also does a great disservice to, and distorts, the original purpose of the dharma and reduces the entire tradition of Buddhism to a form of self-help. Simply put, nirvana is not, and will never be, the end product of any psychotherapeutic encounter.

Seen from this perspective, one of the greatest dangers of Daoism's encounter with psychology is its falling into the self-help trap. It is essential that Daoism should not be reduced to a form of psychology that

thoughtlessly tears it from its cultural and historical context and demystifies what is intentionally mystical. Between the two poles of the experimental and the experiential, Daoism should gravitate toward the psychological approach best equipped to encounter and respectfully receive it. This must be spiritually literate, culturally aware, and attuned.

Translating Hearts and Minds

The Chinese word for “psychologist” is *xinli xuejia* 心理学家 or “master student of the heart’s principles.” The central term here is *xin* 心, “heart,” “mind,” “spirit,” or “center” (Robinet in Pregadio 2008, 1100). From a Western perspective, influenced by popular literature and culture, the heart is imagined as the seat of the emotions, whereas the mind is the seat of reason and intellect. This in itself may lead to a double duality; body-mind, mind-heart, a problem that is at the root of much discussion in Chinese philosophy.

The very fact that heart is itself the center of will, emotion, desire, and intellect (both “rational” and intuitive) means that it will itself become the center of much contention in all the discussion concerning the relationship among all these “faculties” (Schwartz 1985, 185)

In the Daoist frame of reference, these terms take on a broader significance, including a host of physical, psycho-spiritual, alchemical, and astrological associations, none of which exist in isolation. It challenges the traditional Western or Cartesian duality, as is most obvious in Chinese medicine (Maciocia 2005), which has inspired more “holistic,” “alternative” approaches to appear within and alongside Western medicine.¹

Both Daoist cultivation and Chinese medicine work with a cosmology based on the experience of *qi*, a force or “energy” that occupies a space somewhere between the physical and spiritual realms yet belongs

¹ Marić-Oehler explored this in her conference paper by focusing on the work of the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1961). Interestingly Reich’s belief in a pervasive and binding bioenergetic force called “orgone” has strong parallels with Chinese medicine.

not entirely to either. How could a reductionistic empiricism of the type used in many forms of psychology and biomedicine ever hope to find a suitable equivalent of *qi*, let alone make sense of it?

A number of individuals and institutes, such as the International Yan Xin Qigong Association, work to adapt the concept of *qi* into the scientific and medical discourse, typified in Yan Xin's somewhat curious slogan "save Qigong with science." Seeking to measure and tame *qi*, such research institutes seem to place their faith in "scientism" as if it were the sole benchmark of validity. In doing so, they risk devaluing millennia of rigorously pursued and arduously attained experiential evidence. Does the Dao even deal in data?

In many respects we need to recognize when, where, and why we are speaking different languages for different reasons. This is not to suggest that there are not times when we are indeed speaking the same or at least a similar language: as, for example that of alchemy. Daoism contains a rich and ancient alchemical lexicon (see Kohn and Wang 2009). Transpersonal psychology also commonly utilizes the language and imagery of alchemy in its approaches (Jung 1980; Cavilli 2002; Somers 2004). In fact, the word "alchemy" may well be of Chinese origin (Selin 2008).

Alchemy has followed a similar path in both Western and Eastern traditions. External forms have sought the philosopher's stone, an item or substance capable of transmuting base metals into gold or of producing an elixir of immortality. Both Daoism and transpersonal psychological approaches metaphorize external alchemical methods to corresponded to psycho-spiritual processes. Both internalize the philosopher's stone to represent the sentient psyche that transmutes ordinary being and awareness into a more refined, cosmic form. Also, Daoism and transpersonal psychology share a belief in the power and potential of internal transformation and use very similar language.

Forms of Dialogue

Any dialogue between Daoism and psychology must recognize that there is often a double translation: first, from Chinese to English (or other languages); second, from Daoism into psychology (Lü 2008). One example is Japanese Client Centered Therapy (CCT), a form of humanistic psychology. Its leading protagonist, Fujio Tomoda, makes heavy use of Daoist terms, notably *wuwei* 無爲 (Cummins 1996). Here the term denotes the non-directive, non-prescriptive approach of the CCT therapist, who seeks to cultivate a therapeutic presence and just be with the client, providing unconditional positive regard while trusting in the client's ability to self-heal (Rogers 2004).

Another example appears in Zhang Tiabu's presentation on Mount Wudang, dealing with "Daoist Notion of Governance through Nonaction and the Nonlingual Therapeutic Elements in Psychoanalysis." Based on comments by one of his patients concerning silence during sessions, the paper outlined how the therapist uses a prescribed, benevolent silence to allow the client to talk openly and freely associate without censorship or interruption. In this instance, the patient himself interpreted the silence as a form of *wuwei* and thus perceived the doctor as working from a Daoist framework. Zhang also reported that the client was impressed by the method and experienced it as an effective therapeutic technique. Zhang, on the other hand, perceived himself as working within a Western psychoanalytic tradition, yet his patient did not recognize this and interpreted their exchange from a more native, culturally comprehensible perspective. Rather than the psychologization of Daoism, this would be the Daoification of psychology, a dialogue moving in a different direction.

Psychology and psychotherapy tend to shy away from idealizing or exalting the end result of their procedures. The fruit of the psychotherapeutic process, the "more well adjusted individual," is a far cry from the sage of the *Daode jing*, the perfected of the Zhuangzi, or the immortal of the religion. At the end of the psychotherapeutic process, the client does not expect to be able to enter water without getting wet, enter fire without getting burned, fly among the clouds, live as long as Heaven and Earth, or exhibit any magical powers. By the same token, sages, perfected, and immortals have little interest in being well adjusted to society. On

the contrary, their *raison d'être* is to overcome the limitations of the world and to be outsiders and eccentrics, or—in some cases—farsighted leaders who are far ahead of the crowds.

Similarly, while it is not the aim of mainstream psychology to have clients cultivate an immortal embryo or undergo any form of spiritual rebirth in the Daoist sense, transpersonal psychology does contain some ideas of rebirth, which it sees as a "profound spiritual-psychological transformation," understood in an archetypal sense (Jung 1986). For this reason, it seems to me that transpersonal and integral approaches within psychology are best suited for any dialogue with Daoism. They have a trans-disciplinary character (Braud and Anderson 1998), strongly emphasize consciousness, work heavily with mind-body relationship (Lancaster 1991; 2004), and are exceptional in their spiritual literacy (Wilber 2006).

At times, even transpersonal approaches have difficulty dealing with and honestly facing the literal belief in ideas such as perfection, transcendence, and immortality. When faced with these, it is important that psychologists resist the temptation to interpret the tradition, noting "what they mean to say is . . ." It is much better to accept that they may simply be encountering a completely different worldview.

One venue for this ongoing dialogue and process of acceptance is the newly established Northern Institute of Daoist Studies, a collaborative project of Leeds Metropolitan University and the Manchester Academy for Transpersonal Studies. Dedicated to furthering the dialogue between Daoism and transpersonal psychology on an international stage, the Institute solidly bases its work on mutual respect and curiosity, recognizing the respective cultural contexts of both disciplines. Although with a strong scholarly base, the Institute welcomes contributions from non-academics and practitioners of Daoist cultivation and hopes in particular to elucidate the transformations proposed by internal alchemy in relation to transpersonal and integral psychology. It also emphasizes the recognition of certain dualistic tendencies inherent in Western thought and psychology and hopes, with the help of the Daoist dialogue, to increasingly move beyond them. Both sides, it is hoped, will benefit from ongoing interaction, better mutual understanding, and greater appreciation. And, who knows, maybe some day clients of psychotherapy will in fact enter water without getting wet.

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Practice in the Classroom

To Taiji or Not to Taiji

SETH HARTER

I am a new-comer to the field of Daoist studies, only recently drawn into it by my students.¹ I trained in modern Chinese history as a graduate student and then took a job as an Asian studies teacher at a college with only 300 students where each faculty member is charged with covering the curricular terrain that would elsewhere be the responsibility of an entire department.

In response to student interest, I developed a course called “Foundations of Chinese Thought” which, in its second iteration, I simplified to “Introduction to Confucianism and Daoism” and co-taught with a colleague in Religious Studies who is an Islam specialist. Where Daoism was concerned, we did the only thing we knew: *Laozi* 老子 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 rounded out with cursory sessions on poetry and landscape art. A year later, while aiding two students in more advanced independent studies, I discovered just how much I had been missing.

This discovery posed three *wenti* 問題—simultaneously questions and problems. The first was epistemological: why had my colleague and

¹ This paper was first presented at the Fifth International Daoist Studies Conference, Wudangshan, China in June, 2009. My thanks to the conference organizers and the audience of the panel “Daoist Diasporic Transmission and Encounters.” For underwriting my participation in the conference, my gratitude to the office of the Marlboro College Dean of Faculty. For their willingness to engage in the experiments that led to this paper, my thanks to Amer Latif and the students in “Making Way: Daoist Ritual and Practice,” as well as all of the scholars who responded to my requests for syllabi and interviews. For comments on the conference paper, I am indebted to Sari Brown, William Edelglass, Ian Johnson, Livia Kohn, and Wu Xuemeng.

I, coming from different disciplines and institutions, both known of *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* and virtually nothing else from the Daoist tradition? The second was pedagogical: how could I do a better and more comprehensive job teaching Daoism the next time? The third combined epistemology and pedagogy and pushed them into the somatic realm: what would it mean to teach the tradition in a way that included some element of physical practice? What risks and benefits, to my students and to the field, would such teaching entail?

In order to answer these questions, I read works on the history of Daoism's diffusion in the West. Next, I designed and taught a new course that emphasized ritual and self-cultivation. And finally, I surveyed scholars in the field of Daoist studies teaching in North America, gathering their syllabi and asking them about how they balanced attention to classical philosophy with coverage of liturgy and self-cultivation, how they moved between texts and physical practice.²

I argue that the answers to these questions are of interest not only to someone like myself who is still at an early stage of course design but also to the field of Daoist Studies more broadly, because every time we teach a subject we are engaged, if only implicitly, in a series of redefinitions and reflections. Most directly, we define the subject of inquiry by what we emphasize and what we exclude. We also define and reflect, I argue, the current state of the field and its place in the academy. A study of the place of practice in the teaching of Daoism, therefore, provides insight into the current state of Daoist studies, and, by extension, into other fields concerned with practice, notably Buddhist studies and contemplative studies.

² I sent out 63 e-mail solicitations to scholars whose names I recognized from publications in Daoist Studies, all teaching at or recently retired from colleges and universities in North America. I received 36 responses to the brief e-mail survey and conducted 13 interviews of roughly 45 minutes each. In addition, I examined 25 syllabi for courses exclusively or largely devoted to Daoism.

The Survey

My survey and interview questions were intended to engage teachers active in a wide range of disciplines. I received responses from scholars working in departments of Religious Studies, History, East Asian Studies, and Philosophy, and spoke with scholars who characterized their approach to Daoism as sinological, and anthropological.³ At the risk of oversimplifying a heterogeneous field, the approaches to Daoism fell along a spectrum from those who emphasized Daoism's potential to illuminate specifically *Chinese* history and culture to those who emphasized Daoism's potential to provide new insight, alongside other religious traditions, into the *human experience*. Many scholars emphasized both of these functions. None of the philosophers characterized their approach to Daoist texts as parallel to the methods used by many of their colleagues working in the Western tradition: that is, testing primary texts for argumentative validity and truth claims or using the texts as a springboard for original philosophizing. Rather, they emphasized the centrality of the texts to Chinese intellectual history.⁴

I wished to learn how teachers, regardless of disciplinary orientation, were addressing the matter of physical practice in their courses on Daoism. The two most prominent recent articles on the subject of how to teach Daoism do not answer this question. Writing in 1998, Russell Kirkland emphasized the need to "give Lao-Zhuang its due, then get on with it," encouraging teachers to include treatment of other early texts like the *Neiye* 内業 as well as the development of Daoism in the medieval and

³ Livia Kohn has provided a concise summary of the diverse disciplinary contributions to Daoist studies in her 2009 article "Daoist Studies in North America: A Survey of Scholars and Recent Trends" www.daoiststudies.org/dao/node/690 (accessed 30 May 2009). In addition to the fields listed above, her survey includes scholars inside the academy working in literature, art history, and medicine, and those outside engaged in translation and physical practice.

⁴ My cursory reading suggests that some scholars *do* take this approach; I simply did not have the opportunity to speak with them. On the matter of the difference between the Chinese philosophical tradition and its Western counterpart, Bryan van Norden observed: "It is just as ethnocentric to assume that every other culture must be engaged in what we call 'philosophy' as it is to assume that no other culture could do philosophy." Norden 1996, 225, in Clarke 2000, 168.

modern period (Kirkland 1998, 113). He makes a compelling case for studying the history of physical practice, but does not engage the question of whether or not to partake of such practice.

One may infer, both by the subject's absence and by his treatment of contemporary Daoism in the West, that he would not endorse such an approach. Eight years later, James Miller and Elijah Siegler wrote a response to Kirkland's article in which they advocated a more inclusive approach to teaching Daoism. On physical practice they say: "One question that must be broached, however, is whether to teach qigong or taiji practices in class. Does this help 'embody' teaching or does it cross the line into advocacy?" (2007, 105). Without answering these questions, they note that their students were very keen on including practice. Both articles incline toward prescription rather than description, limiting the use of actual teaching practices to the role of anecdotal evidence in support of arguments for how one ought to teach Daoism. So, what do we actually do?

Findings

Half of the scholars I interviewed engaged students in physical practice in class, albeit most of them in a very modest way.⁵ While there was some correlation between those who brought practice into class and those who identified with a Religious Studies orientation on the one hand, and between those who did not bring practice into class and who identified with a philosophical orientation, on the other, this association was not isomorphic. Teachers who did not bring practice into class attributed their disinclination to a wide variety of reasons, some of which were not categorically at odds with the principle of incorporating physical practice while others were clearly hostile to the idea.

Among the respondents I would classify as tolerant or curious were some who noted that the scope of their courses was confined to the pre-

⁵ Respondents A, B, C, D, and M used some physical practice. E used to but has since stopped. G has had guests come to class for this purpose. Respondents F, H, I, J, K, and L did not use physical practice in class.

imperial era and therefore physical practice simply did not belong there.⁶ Others lamented that there simply was not enough time in a semester to add anything further to a syllabus already crowded with texts devoted in some cases not only to Daoism, but also to Confucianism, Buddhism, and popular religion. Some indicated a real interest in the possibility of combining textual analysis and physical practice, but felt that their own training or physical coordination was insufficient to guide students in even basic self-cultivation. Finally, one respondent reflected on the limits of his mandate, noting: "I don't intend to be able to confer immortality on them from coming to my class" (Respondent K).

Why Not?

Among those who were more critical of the notion, some felt that any engagement with physical practice in a class that was otherwise devoted to a text-based study of Daoism would necessarily be superficial and inauthentic (Respondents E, F). The sort of self-cultivation historically undertaken by Daoists was the work of decades; a few minutes of similar exercises twice a week for a term would not permit students a meaningful encounter with this tradition. Furthermore, the superficiality engendered by such a brief encounter would be likely to provoke contempt for Daoism rather than critical empathy or insight.

Among respondents condemning practice, the most common reason was a concern for maintaining critical distance from the object of study. In the words of one teacher:

I think that trying to encourage the constructive application of it, or trying to do self-cultivation may be a very noble and very interesting task, but it is *poison* in the academic study of religion... It absolutely compromises the integrity of what scholars in Religious Studies should be doing: ... Despite realizing that the word 'objective' is a sort of dangerous term, giving an objective scholarly assessment of what is going on in the tradition.

⁶ Note that this reasoning rests on an understanding of Daoism in which philosophy pre-dates practice, the former holding sway in the classical age, the latter in the medieval period. Recent work by Harold Roth on the *Neiye* calls this periodization into question (1999). Note also the emphasis on physical practice in the *Xiang'er* commentary to the *Laozi* (Bokenkamp 1997, 29-142).

Not trying to propagate it, not trying to encourage applications of tradition among our students, not trying in any way to affect our students' religious lives or experiences concretely. That's for theologians, that's for ministers, that's for self-help people, that's for psychologists, that's for parents, it's not for academics in the study of religion. (Respondent F)

Others raised the problem of belief or sincerity that such an undertaking presumably requires, posing a hypothetical inversion of the exercise in order to illuminate its inappropriateness: "How would it be in China if, in a Religious Studies course, [the instructor] said, 'now we are going to study Christianity, so next week in class we are going to do a Catholic mass.?' " (Respondent I). Such a question raises two further issues; whether this is a suitable analogy; and whether the performance of a mass by the uninitiated is necessarily taboo (see below).

Finally, the skeptics pointed out that physical practice could be dangerous when undertaken without the guidance of a fully qualified adept. One teacher noted that the primary texts themselves were not, and were never meant to be, sufficient guidance for a regimen of physical self-cultivation (Respondent I). Even with proper training, physical practices could have drastic unintended consequences. In response to Bill Porter's question about how he lost the use of his eyes, a Daoist hermit replied: "Daoist practice can be dangerous. I did something wrong, and they went out like a couple of candles" (1993, 216).

Another respondent who used to encourage students to engage in physical practice found that it could reactivate students' past traumas, "I do not want to be responsible for these things. It is rare, but I do not want to be involved with that" (Respondent E). Rather than initiating students' engagement with physical practice, this teacher now encourages those who are involved with martial or meditation practice already to draw on their experiences in class discussion. A third respondent observed that we might, on our own behalf, weigh the risks involved in physical practice and elect to bear them, but that taking such risks on behalf of students was a very different matter (Respondent H).

Who in Favor?

Those who do call upon their students to engage in physical practice in class all contextualized this choice in two ways. First, they noted that the physical component of their classes was very limited: limited in the time devoted to it, limited in the nature of the physical demands it placed on the students, and limited in the expectations teachers had—and encouraged the students to have—for its potential to either transform the students or to put them in the shoes of adepts.

Second, they noted that introducing physical practice in university classes entailed a certain swimming upstream. They did it despite the conventions of their disciplines, despite the pressure of trying to find time, despite being self-conscious about their qualifications, and despite the pervasive discomfort that surrounds attention to the body in the classroom. In the words of one teacher: "It's a funny kind of squeamishness about requiring people to do things with their bodies that I guess I kind of admit is a little bit irrational. There are all kinds of things that we require people to do" (Respondent H).

Surprisingly, the most common observation concerning the benefits of using meditation exercises in class had nothing explicitly to do with Daoism. Teachers found that a few minutes of visualization or attentive breathing at the start of class helped students to leave behind whatever non-academic concerns they might otherwise have carried into class discussion (Respondents A, J). More predictably, teachers noted that since cultivation of the body as a subject of inquiry was constantly in the forefront of the class, adding practice supported conceptual coherence. Some used the relationship between discussion and practice as an opportunity to call students' attention to the differences between studies of Daoism in a Western university and traditional training. In addition, this line of inquiry provoked students to ask questions about how far one must go in one's commitment to a tradition in order to gain a sufficient understanding of it (Respondents B, H). The paths taken by Kristofer Schipper, Michael Saso, and others offer case studies in scholarship through full engagement (Respondent C).

Eva Wong, in *Cultivating Stillness*, takes the value of physical practice a step further: "Store the generative energies and the principles will be clear" (1992, xxvi). In this view, practice is not simply a way to extend understanding beyond the textual, or from the epistemological to the

ontological realm, rather it is a precondition for full understanding. One respondent's syllabus echoes this view: "The cultivation and refinement of the body will lead to the attainment of truth, personal identity and spiritual transformation. The embodiment of the mind provides a possible space and an effective opportunity to understand the cosmos, thinking, science and spirituality" (Respondent D). Some teachers, interested in the potential of combining textual and corporeal training, have taken to teaching seminars outside the conventional university setting with students who explicitly seek this balance.

An Experiment

In spring 2009, in a revised version of my Daoism class, I required students to engage in at least ten hours of physical practice outside of class. I arranged for a taiji quan course to be taught through the dance department and took advantage of the fact that an alumna of the college was leading a weekly meditation group on campus. Two of the six students in the class were unable to take part in either of these activities, so I encouraged them to continue their pursuit of martial arts and to attend day-long meditation retreats offered in the area.

Roughly once a week, at the start of class, I led the group in ten minutes of qigong/taiji quan: simple warm-ups, some animal frolics, and variations of push-hands. On one occasion, one student who had a lot of experience with meditation led the class in an exercise that focused on clearing the mind through counting breaths. Throughout the term, I encouraged students to draw on their experiences with physical practice in class discussion. Toward the end, I required each student to write an eight-page paper reflecting on the way in which their physical practice had shaped their understanding of Daoism.

In structuring the course this way, I tried to follow Michael LaFargue's appeal for a confrontational hermeneutics. When studying a foreign people and their culture, he argues, rather than emphasize that part of the tradition most familiar to us and most in accord with our own beliefs, we should give "special attention to those aspects of their views which might present the strongest challenge to our own views" (2001, 45). At the content level, *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* can certainly challenge our students' views, though a number of them are quite adept at finding in

these texts support for an all-too-familiar quasi-anarchist, slacker, skeptic disposition. At the level of methodology, however, arguing about the meaning of primary texts in translation is entirely too familiar for liberal arts students raised on a great books curriculum. Trying to stimulate *qi* 氣 is another matter. As James Miller notes, Daoists insist on a hermeneutics of the body: "The notion that our bodies can be a repository of meaning and a medium of knowledge. This emphasis on embodiment constitutes a profound challenge to Western academic intellectualism" (2003, 35)

I would never argue that the physical practice our class engaged in was impressive in its own right – in fact, from an aesthetic point of view it was mortifying – nonetheless it made four very positive contributions to the students' learning experience:

1. It enabled them to develop a deeper understanding of our readings about the body. In his recent study of the *Neijing tu* 內景圖 (Chart of Inner Passageways), Louis Komjathy writes, on the matter of cultivation: "Here one encounters perhaps one of the most significant Daoist challenges to conventional understandings of human being: one's physiology literally is sacred. One *embodies* the Dao, and one may experience the Dao through/in/as one's own psychosomatic and energetic being" (2009, 70). Having been called upon not simply to *think* about the body but also to *use* the body, the students had an easier time overcoming their impulse to categorically separate the sacred and the material and thus could more fully understand this idea.

2. It diminished their skepticism. Being able to feel *qi* in their palms was transformative. What changed was not the purity of their bodies so much as their willingness to take some of the more challenging elements of the Daoist tradition seriously. When discussing Shawn Arthur's study of *bigu* 避穀 (abstention from grains) (2006), for example, class members drew on their own unexpected experiences with *qi* to avoid impulsively rejecting the idea of *bigu*'s efficacy. Through very elementary physical practice, they had developed a broader view of what was possible.

3. It made some students conclude that practice was a necessary part of respectfully engaging in the study of a religious tradition. This idea challenges the orthodoxy of previous generations. Perhaps what sanctions this inversion is a shift in how participation is understood. The argumentative power of the Catholic mass example cited above rests on

the assumption that participation in such rituals should be restricted to believers. Outsider students, who are certainly not initiates and presumably not believers, would therefore have no business taking part. My students, more ecumenical and permissive than their predecessors, don't share these assumptions.

Roy Rappaport, in a reflection on meaning and ritual, calls attention to the difference between acceptance and belief: "Liturgical orders, even those performed in solitude, are *public* orders and participation in them constitutes an acceptance of a public order *regardless* of the private state of belief of the performer" (2002, 455). By participating in physical practice, my students were not claiming to be Daoists, rather they were accepting the premise that Daoism – its texts, rituals, and patterns of self-cultivation – constitutes a legitimate way of being.

4. It provoked students to wonder why this sort of activity is so uncommon at colleges and universities. One student compared the experience to learning how to ride a bike. Reading a manual can only take you so far; ultimately you need to put your feet on the pedals and risk a fall. I am not sure that this line of thinking advanced my students' understanding of the Daoist tradition *per se*, but insofar as it spurred them to ask bigger questions about the purpose and process of their education, I consider it a distinct benefit.

The Broader View

What do these clashing views on the wisdom of incorporating physical practice in a class on Daoism tell us? Approaches to teaching the subject, like the subject itself, are, and will likely continue to be, diverse. That said, my methodology may have exaggerated the degree of disagreement on this matter, for it may be that the very modest physical practice envisioned by the advocates would not be sufficient to trigger the alarm voiced by the critics.

It is important to note that all of the respondents who incorporate practice in their classes emphasized that the physical aspect was an accessory to the whole. Some used it as an aid to help students transition into the class; some turned to it when the collective energy of the class seemed to require it; some made participation optional. In no case was the physical activity a featured part of the course syllabus or a weighted

component of the students' final grades.⁷ I would argue that the strong interest in the role of physical practice demonstrated by my respondents and students, when combined with the tenuousness of its current inclusion in courses on Daoism, reflects the rapid change taking place in Religious Studies in general and in Daoist Studies specifically.

Like other young disciplines in the academy, Religious Studies has sought to demonstrate its legitimacy through the adoption of scientific methods and terminology. Talk of data points, hypotheses, and validity was common in my interviews, though not among the younger scholars (Respondents F, I). As the field has matured, memories of its entanglement with theology have faded and with them the unwavering commitment to objectivity and disengagement from religious practice. I am reminded of the way a 50-something friend recently explained his father's generation's outlook on changes in Chinese Communist Party policy: "Mao was right, but Deng was also right." By analogy, earlier Religious Studies needed a rigid adherence to the doctrine of objectivity and disengagement, but now, perhaps, it is appropriate to soften that stance (Gyatso 2003, 12).

Daoist Studies, too, has passed through an early stage of struggling for recognition. Due to the work of Kristofer Schipper's generation, the academy has come to accept that Daoism is a living tradition and the *Daozang* 道藏 a true treasure trove. As one respondent said of the canon: "It is not just this completely inaccessible murky depository of weird stuff. Which is what people thought before" (Respondent G).

A number of teachers noted that the field of Daoist Studies is now where Buddhist Studies was ten or even twenty years ago (Respondents A, B, C, H). They applied this characterization to the availability of texts in translation, to popular recognition of the religion, to the development of Western institutions devoted to it, and notably to matters of disagreement over how to teach it and also to its struggle with questions of objectivity and disengagement. Should Buddhist Studies continue to

⁷ In this respect, the physical component of the classes was almost akin to an esoteric element while the focus on textual analysis was the exoteric element. Of course, making this association only raises new questions about the appropriateness of including physical practice in classroom instruction.

serve as a guide to Daoist Studies' future, more teacher-practitioners and more physical practice seem likely.⁸

Unlike Buddhism, however, Daoism has been until very recently an exclusively East Asian religion, and so changes in China and China's relationship with the West have had a profound impact on how Daoism is practiced and studied today. Changing political and intellectual conditions in the PRC, and changing cultural and demographic conditions in the West have meant that scholars now have much more exposure to practice. As Livia Kohn notes in her survey of Daoist Studies in North America, the center of gravity in the field has shifted from an emphasis on texts to history, and then again from history to practice (2009). These changes have also transformed the expectations of our students. As James Miller and Elijah Siegler, commenting on the growth of Daoist-inspired practices in the west, observe: "This emerging cultural interchange raises a new set of problems for teaching about Daoism in contemporary North American colleges and universities." Many students are aware of taiji quan, qigong, and fengshui before enrolling in class.

As a result of this religious traffic, it is no longer possible to suggest that there is somehow a 'real' Daoism that exists in some authentic, pristine condition accessible only to erudite scholars skilled enough to read literary Chinese texts. Rather, through immigration and cultural exchange, Daoism has become a living, global religious tradition, one that bears a complex set of relationships to Chinese culture and that raises important questions for the scholar of religion about issues of tradition, authenticity and representation. (Miller and Siegler 2007, 103)

Finally, as a result of this journal's work and the series of international conferences on Daoist Studies begun in 2003, scholars and practitioners are becoming better versed in each other's approaches to the tradition. All of these trends seem likely to encourage the inclusion of some measure of practice in the teaching of Daoism at American universities.

⁸ On the significance of the body in Buddhist doctrine, see Mrozić 2007; on the question of how to teach Buddhism, see Tsai 2008; and on the issue of disengagement, see Gyatso 2003.

Conclusion

This essay raises several questions. First, if we are going to incorporate more practice in our teaching of Daoism, how can we do it in a way that is authentic and responsive to both the tradition and our own academic institutions? Second, does the emphasis on the body in Daoism mean that this question should be answered differently than it would be for other religions? Finally, does the emphasis on physical self-cultivation in Daoism suggest that practitioners and scholars of the tradition should be playing a more prominent role in the broader movement afoot in higher education toward contemplative and experiential learning?⁹ And what, in turn, could this movement teach us about how to teach Daoism? Clearly, more research, and more practice, are in order!

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⁹ For more on this trend, see the work of The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education: <http://www.acmhe.org/>

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Ni Hua-Ching's Americanization of the “Eternal Breath of Dao”

MARK JOHNSON¹

Being one of the first Westerners initiated by Daoist master Ni Hua-Ching 倪化清 in Taiwan in the winter of 1975, and having spent another eight years with him in this country, I was an intrinsic witness to the Americanization of his particular lineage as it evolved in the USA. Because our training in Taiwan was rather orthodox, Master Ni never intended to simply “transplant” his sect into U.S. soil, but rather thought of it as being a “skin graft” onto the tree of Daoism already growing here. Still, the skin graft was fast and came with continuous changes in content and teaching style.

The most active center of Daoism in the U.S. in the early 1970s was the Taoist Sanctuary in Los Angeles. I joined them in 1972 and trained there until the winter of 1974. Eastern philosophy and religion were not new to me, for I had lived in an Advaita Vedanta Ashram in Florida from 1962 to 1970 and afterwards spent a year sitting with Suzuki Rishi in his Zen Center in Tassajara. Only later did I realize that my training at those centers and especially at the Taoist Sanctuary, were in stark contrast to my later, more intense and formal training in Taiwan. Our daily regimen in Taiwan continued for a short time in the U.S., but within months, things started to change.

¹ This article is based on a longer and more detailed presentation found in my new book, *Life Is Divine Play* (Amazon - iUniverse Publisher 2009).

The Taoist Sanctuary

The Sanctuary was housed in a rented section of a Protestant church in North Hollywood. No one actually lived there, and the various Daoist groups would come and go during the week with very little contact. There was no daily routine, nor did we adhere to any common standards or sets of shared values. We all called ourselves Daoists, but in fact our taiji quan faction thought the gongfu students were uncivilized brutes and they thought the taiji guys were wimps. Somehow we kept from strangling each other, and over time, we learned mutual respect.

Khig Dhiegh (Ph.D in psychology) was the principal instructor at the Sanctuary. He was considered a major *Yijing* (Book of Changes) scholar and had written an impressive book titled *The Eleventh Wing: An Exposition of the Dynamics of I Ching for Now* (1972). He made his living as an actor, starring as Wo Fat in the “Hawaii Five O” series. He often characterized himself as an actor taking on the role of *Yijing* scholar. Another actor, Chao Li Chi, taught classical Chinese as we translated the *Daode jing* in its transmitted form and in the newly discovered manuscripts. In addition, there were June Yu’er who taught taiji quan in the lineage of Master Guo from San Francisco, and Share K. Lew who instructed in martial arts. The entire set-up was quite chaotic and we were an unruly bunch. I enjoyed every minute of it and it wasn’t until I decided to go to Taiwan to study acupuncture that I discovered the more formal and disciplined aspects of Daoism.

Training in Taiwan

In late 1974, I went to Kaohsiung in Taiwan with a couple from the Taoist sanctuary. They had been studying with an herbal master from there for years and invited anyone from the Sanctuary to join them. I was bored with my life as a graphic designer and was interested in becoming an herbalist or acupuncturist so I went with them. After a few weeks of playing “catch up,” I decided that I needed a teacher of my own. After a series of incredible synchronicities, I stumbled upon Master Ni, then known as a medical practitioner and author of books on Daoism under the name of Ni Ching-Huh 倪清和. He agreed that if we helped him translate the sacred scriptures of his lineage, he would teach us acupunc-

ture. So we did. We worked on the project ten hours a day for months until he eventually initiated us into his Daoist sect.

His lineage was called the "Union of Dao and Man" (Daoren heyi 道人合一) while his particular sect went by the name of the "Eternal Breath of Dao" (Da Dao hefeng tang 大道和風堂). It was an eclectic mix starting with his father, Ni You-San, a well-respected physician from southeast China who taught Master Ni most of his medical knowledge. Master Ni's earliest ties with formal Daoism came from a temple near his hometown where he trained as a teenager. I once visited that temple outside Wenzhou (see Fig. 1). The abbot told me they had strong ties with the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing.



Fig. 1: Master Ni's home temple in Wenzhou with his older Dao brother.

Master Ni also claimed an unbroken succession through various later teachers to the medieval Highest Clarity masters Sima Chengzhen (647-735) and Tao Hongjing (456-536). He certainly knew innumerable styles of taiji quan, gongfu, and bagua zhang, and had unrivaled knowledge of acupuncture, herbal medicine, Chinese astrology, and the *Yijing*. He also believed in a strict daily regimen with high ethical standards.

Our practice in Taiwan was punctuated by a slew of psychic phenomena. Master Ni would regularly intrude on our dreams and on several occasions was seen in several places at the same time. Once he killed

a rat by just pointing his sword of exorcism at it. And once a turtle arrived in the mail, sent by a construction worker who had never heard of Master Ni but he sent the turtle because the turtle spirit told him to do so in a dream.

Then there was the time when I fell asleep on the floor after editing for nine hours and had a vivid dream of Master Ni leading me to a high spiritual realm and putting me on trial. After many arguments back and forth, a decision was handed down that I could continue training with them. When I woke up, I saw Master Ni was standing over me. He said: "You were allowed to stay with us by the skin of your teeth." With that, he turned, went into his room, and never mentioned that incident again.

Having completed the basics of our training, we were finally ready for initiation in the spring of 1975. It was a very formal event. We started the ceremony at 2 a.m. since it was the most auspicious time astrologically. We brought flowers, food offerings, and spirit money to the altar, where we offered them with numerous prostrations. Then we entered the altar room on our knees with a letter of petition on our heads that evoked a host of deities. Master Ni touched each of us on top of the head and we walked around in an altered state for a few hours.

After our initiation, we began a new regimen that involved daily exercises; the reading of incantations, and participation in a formal weekly ceremony. Soon thereafter, we returned to the U.S. to prepare a medical clinic and spiritual center for him. This resulted in Master Ni's main center, the "Eternal Breath of Tao" in Malibu near Los Angeles.

Practice in Los Angeles

There were about six to eight of us living at the sprawling ranch style center in the hills above Malibu full time (see Fig. 2). We were constantly coming and going to our various jobs in Los Angeles during the day, but many other people joined us on the weekends. We usually had around 50 people for Master Ni's workshops and public talks.

Rent was cheap for those of us who lived and worked there full time. But his workshops and formal classes were expensive and between those and seeing patients all day long, Master Ni made a lot of money in a short time.



Fig. 2: The Malibu Center

We used to get up several hours before daybreak every day and meditate in the tops of evergreen trees until the sun came up. Master Ni said we were so mentally and physically restless, the energy at the top of the trees would mellow us out, and it did. At sunrise, we would walk up the mountain in single file to overlook Los Angeles in the east and the ocean in the west.

We did various forms of exercises (daoyin, taiji quan, qigong) for about an hour, and on the full moon day of every month, we placed special emphasis on absorbing the *qi* of both the rising sun and the setting moon. We then returned to the shrine and chanted incantations for a half hour before we went to our various jobs (see Fig. 4).

At night we went back to the shrine for further training. One of the first things we did was "Self Release," as he called it, or "Chaotic Meditation," as the Hindus call it. Our spontaneous movement would sometimes evolve into screams, spasms, and writhings on the floor. It was great theater and seemed to clean out a lot of people. Every sixty days, moreover, on the *gengshen* day of the sixty-day cycle, we would stay up all night to prevent the Three Worms from ascending to the celestial admin-

istrators and report our sins or, as Master Ni explained, because it was a day of double metal and metal was the phase of reformation which we needed a lot.



Fig. 3: The Shrine in the Malibu Center.

We also worked with koans at our evening meditations. Master Ni claiming that they had been stolen by Zen Buddhists from their Daoist originators. We even slept in a position where our right hand was stimulating acupuncture points on the right side of our brains, the intuitive, nonlinear part. A few of us were also busily practicing “dual cultivation,” producing “sweet dew” and creating our “red babies.” In other words, every minute of every day and night was given to cultivation.

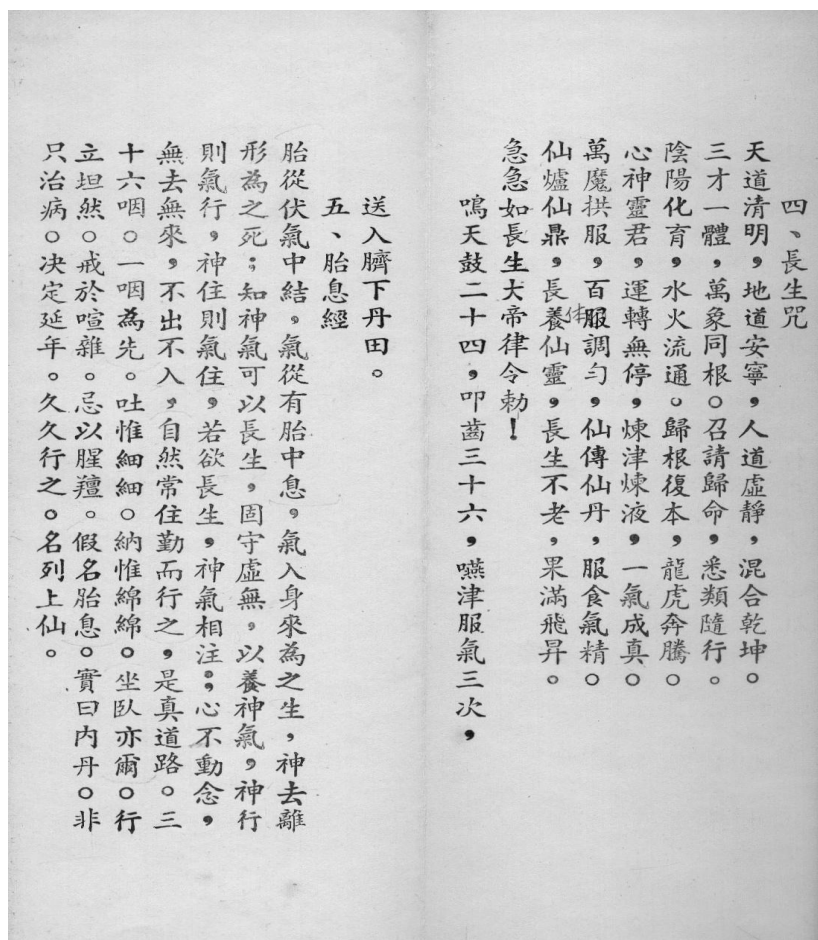


Fig. 4: One of many texts of incantations.

Changes and Adaptations

After only a few months of "old school" discipline, Master Ni shifted his attitude and training style. In Taiwan, he had taught his students in a subtler and more personal way. Each student had their own mode of taiji quan, provided after he analyzed their particular body type, psychological disposition, and life direction according to traditional astrology. Also in Taiwan, he used to infer things instead of stating them outright. He had a stronger psychic connection with his Chinese students and he

seems to have respected them more than us. Of course, after 28 years of working with them, his small group of 12 were the cream of his crop. In America, his thousands of students were always coming and going while not staying long enough to learn much of anything, and they were certainly not as dedicated as his Taiwan students.

He soon stopped all initiations, later confiding that many American students were so psychologically imbalanced, he did not want to defile his lineage. He also mentioned that his personal, subtle power was not evoking the same response from us that he got with his Chinese students. He had to increase his herbal formulas greatly for Americans in order to elicit the same reaction he used to get in China with half the dosage. I also noted that there were hardly any psychic phenomena like those he used to evoke in Taiwan. There, it was not unusual that he or one of his students would go into trance during their Sunday morning ceremony and someone else would speak through them. One spirit claimed to have lived on earth 4,000 years ago.

In Malibu, Master Ni went into a channeling trance only once. During a workshop entirely unrelated to trance mediumship, he said a being from the sun wanted to speak through him and asked that we turn the heat up in the room. The room rapidly approached 120 degrees, and yet he asked for more blankets! About fifteen blankets later, the deity from the sun began to speak, describing everyone's five-phases composition and how we should balance ourselves. All the while we only wanted to run out of the room and get cooled off. The really strange thing, however, was that Master Ni started to sweat only after he came back into himself and then rushed out of that room as fast as we did. That was the first and last time he ever did anything like that in the U.S.

Another significant difference was that he talked hardly at all when teaching movement in Taiwan. He said that learning to imitate other people's movement was a gift we all had as children and here was an opportunity to rediscover it. Just following him would make us look more carefully and encourage us to glean what was going on inside him. To intellectualize taiji quan was to rob us of that useful talent. However, as the years went by, he talked more and more, giving explanations and instructions, realizing that without them no one would ever get the benefit of the movement.

Not only did our daily disciplines start to erode through time, our movement styles went through radical changes. He started by teaching us Eight Treasures qigong because he said we were too blocked to benefit from his more subtle taiji quan styles. He also said we should never confuse them with the simpler Eight Brocades, because his version originally had sixty-four moves, one for each hexagram of the *Yijing*. I called it "roto router" of the meridian system because it took one and one-half hours to do and was extremely strenuous. As more people complained about the difficulty, Master Ni produced a version in thirty-two moves which we practiced for many years. It seems he went to a further simplification of this form to a point where the original is hardly recognizable.

Next, he taught his Earth-style or Lower Elixir Field form of taiji quan. Every time he repeated the class over the years, they were different and more simply done than before. He said he was merely responding to the energy of the students in each class. The same was true for his Human-style (Middle Elixir Field) and his Heaven-style (Upper Elixir Field) forms. Even his daoyin and bagua zhang changed, and the changes were always toward simplification.

His weekly workshops in various aspects of Daoism soon became monthly, then slowed down to yearly. He turned over more and more of his teaching to senior students and started writing books, publishing forty books in thirty years and still writing (see www.taostar.com), having disappeared into Southeast China from where, I hear, he has very little direct contact with his student-teachers.

Conclusion

As Master Ni's teaching and instruction became more American, something was lost and something gained. The origins of his styles went together with the subtle way he used to teach, but if no one was able or willing to utilize them, what good were they? At the same time, he created a simplified form of Daoism with a strong connection to Chinese medicine that could have a greater appeal to the masses. To him, it seems, this easier version was better than none.

He has certainly reached the masses. His books, his son's Chinese medical clinic and acupuncture college (Yosan Univeristy), their herbal business (Traditions of Tao), and local classes in Santa Monica have in-

fluenced thousands of people in the past thirty years. His senior students are teaching all over the U.S. and DVDs based on his various taiji quan styles, have sold hundreds of thousands of copies .

Especially his books have had a major impact. They bring a subtle, mysterious power to the world that can be sensed by readers, many of whom feel that he comes to them in their dreams. This subtle power is really what makes the greatest difference in the spread of Daoism. It exemplifies Master Ni's pervasive work, matching the *Daode jing* statement he often taught:

A person of Dao works subtly. . .
When he accomplishes his task,
the people who were benefited will say:
"It was we who did it ourselves."

Sample Books by Ni Hua-Ching²

- 1978. *The Complete Works of Lao Tzu* .
- 1978. *The Taoist Inner View of the Universe and the Immortal Realm*.
- 1979. *Tao: the Subtle Universal Law*.
- 1983. *Workbook for Spiritual Development*.
- 1983. *The Book of Changes and the Unchanging Truth*.
- 1989. *Attaining Unlimited Life* (Chuang Tzu).
- 1992. *Internal Alchemy: The Natural Way to Immortality*.
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² Published in Malibu: College of Tao and Traditional Chinese Healing.

Women's Qigong in America

Tradition, Adaptation, and New Trends

ELENA VALUSSI

This article examines the following ten publications on women's qigong techniques:

Videos

Chia, Mantak, 1998. *Slaying the Red Dragon*.

Lee, Daisy. n.d. *Radiant Lotus: Qigong for Women*.

Liu, Yafei. n.d. *Nüzi qigong* (Chinese/German).

Books

Chia, Mantak. 2005 [1986]. *Healing Love through the Dao: Cultivating Female Sexual Energy*. Destiny Books.

Davis, Deborah. 2008. *Women's Qigong for Health and Longevity: A Practical Guide for Women Forty and Over*. Shambhala.

Ferraro, Dominique. 2000. *Qigong for Women: Low-impact Exercises for Enhancing Energy and Toning the Body*. Healing Arts Press.

Hsi Lai. 2001. *The Sexual Teachings of the White Tigress: Secrets of the Female Taoist Master*. Destiny Books.

Hsi Lai. 2006. *White Tigress, Green Dragon: Sexual Secrets for Youthful Restoration and Spiritual Illumination*. White Tigress Society.

Johnson, Yangling Lee. 2001. *A Woman's Qigong Guide: Empowerment through Movement, Diet and Herbs*. YMAA Publication Center.

Zhang, Tinna Chunna, 2008. *Earth Qigong for Women: Awaken Your Inner Healing Power*. Blue Snake Books.

The point of departure for this article is my research on female meditation techniques in China, also called *nüdan* 女丹 or female alchemy. Over the last few years, I have described the historical emergence of the *nüdan* tradition and its Chinese development both in my dissertation and several articles (see Valussi 2003; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2009). Simply put, female alchemy is a textual tradition of Daoist meditation and physiological exercises for women, which emerged in China in the seventeenth century and developed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹ It is part and parcel of the much older tradition of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), which advocates the possibility to achieve immortality through the progressive refinement of the body, aided by meditation, breathing, visualization, and massage exercises. Unlike *neidan*, though, *nüdan* followers adapt theory, practice, and language specifically to the female body.

My research reviewed most of the historical literature available in Chinese on meditation techniques for women, as well as contemporary publications on female meditation techniques in Chinese and English. When talking about contemporary publications on the topic,, while Chinese publications are mostly a contemporary rendition of historical texts, those in Western languages and especially in English reveal a vast contemporary market of healing, spiritual, and meditative techniques for women inspired by Chinese traditions. For the purposes of this paper, I chose to concentrate on American publications simply because I am more familiar with them, but I am aware that these techniques have reached Western audiences outside of the U.S., and one of the items on my list was produced in Germany (Liu Yafei video).

Historical Context

Historically, *nüdan* texts were produced within the Daoist tradition, mostly during sessions of spirit-writing, a form of communication between gods and the community of believers, starting in the seventeenth century. They were religious texts, guiding practitioners to immortality

¹ We know of *nüdan* because the texts that describe its practices have been resurfacing in China in the past twenty years. This resurfacing does not only encompass *nüdan*, but most religious and spiritual texts and practices that lay dormant during the period between the 1940s and the 1980s in China.

and ascension into heaven. This is definitely not the context in which these techniques are described, taught, and performed in the United States. Their aim, rather than complete transcendence, is health and well-being. Even though there is often, but not always, a clear spiritual component in these publications, it is seen as yet another way to help the healing process.

Offerings available on the American market are wide and varied. In some instances, language and techniques are quite similar to what is found in historical *nüdan* texts; in others the practices seem to have no link whatsoever with that tradition. Some contemporary publications have a strong focus on sexuality and its importance in the physical and spiritual well-being of practitioners: this is not present in *nüdan* works and generally uncommon in the *neidan* tradition. Yet despite the variety, I found that *nüdan* techniques and language are widely used and appropriated in Western publications. It is also useful to mention that most of the *neidan* techniques of old are now referred, both in China and in the West, as qigong, a more modern term that is less linked to a religious milieu and favors a health-scientific background.

The mysticism surrounding the techniques and the oral transmission between master and disciple of Daoist techniques, common in Daoist communities in traditional China until the late Ming dynasty, started to dissipate in the Qing when practices became available more widely to a larger market through cheap publications and open transmissions. Secrecy almost ceased in the 1930s, when inner alchemy transformed from a religious to a lay practice and its techniques became a political tool of nation strengthening. In the Republican period, intellectuals reformulated and reorganized alchemical knowledge in order to renew the Chinese heritage, which they thought needed reviving in the face of Western cultural and political onslaught as well as of the Japanese invasion. This effort was intended to help national strengthening and progress.

Under Communist rule after 1949, traditional techniques were not discarded but made even more accessible and public. Already in the 1940s Communists formulated a conscious policy for the "Liberated Areas" to make use of local medical resources within a "scientific orientation." Mao called on modern-trained doctors to unite with traditional therapists who were closer to the people, encouraging them to "help them to reform" (Palmer 2007, 29). Accordingly traditional *neidan* tech-

niques were “reformed” to meet contemporary “scientific” standards. Liu Guizhen, a local Communist cadre, who brought these practices to the Party’s attention, spearheaded this transformation from *neidan* to more “modern” and “scientific” practices, which eventually lead to the creation of qigong. Together with a group of other cadres, Liu “set to work on the task of extracting the method from its religious and ‘superstitious’ setting. The method was compared with techniques described in classical medical texts, its concepts and were reformulated, and its mantras ‘reformed’” (Palmer 2007, 31).

During the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 70s, qigong fell out of favor. It was rediscovered in the 1980s, the time of “qigong fever,” then made its way to the West both through Chinese and Western practitioners. The latter incorporated it in regimens that fit Western healing styles, some with more spiritual accents, others purely health regimens, others again with sexual overtones, and many marketed as forms of “spiritual healing”.

Much work has been done in the intersection between religion and healing; in the West the category of “spiritual healing” has widened to encompass many techniques that might at one point have been connected with specific religious traditions but that are now used in separation from their original religious context to heal a variety of ailments (see Cohen 2002-03). In the specific case of Chinese spiritual healing and qigong, too, some powerful studies have appeared, detailing the specificity of Chinese conceptions of the body and healing, as well as the political implications of the practice of qigong in China (e.g., Ots 1994; Chen 2003).

There are also some studies on the transfer of knowledge to the West, notably in the field of acupuncture. Linda Barnes, in her 1998 article on the Western adoption of Chinese healing techniques and especially acupuncture, argues that “this indigenization of Chinese practices is a complex synthesis which can be described as simultaneously medical, psychotherapeutic, and religious” (1996, 1). She describes a process of acculturation that is at first uncritical, then becomes more and more inquisitive: “Initially, there was a tendency among the non-Chinese to adopt these teachings uncritically. Over time, however, they began to look for sources and methods through which to articulate questions,

which, in some instances, they themselves had introduced into the Chinese practices" (1998, 415).

The process of questioning that acupuncture has undergone over the past three decades has yet to happen for qigong practices, especially those dedicated to women. Only now do critical views of some practices and the questioning of sources appear in American qigong circles. Where do the practices come from? What is the affiliation of the people who teach and write about them?

In many ways the traditional secrecy that had clouded the transmission of *neidan* and also qigong in China has been more accentuated with their transfer to Western practitioners. Books often describe the origins of practices as often shrouded in mystery or too ancient to be verifiable. This is entirely unnecessary. Both Chinese and Western scholars outline the historical development of *neidan* as well as qigong traditions, schools, and techniques (see Kohn and Wang 2009). For the modern period, especially the works of Xun Liu (2009) David Palmer (2006) and Nancy Chen (2003) trace the birth and growth of *neidan* and qigong during the Republican era and under Communism as a mixture of inner alchemical techniques and Western medicine. For the pre-modern period, many more monographs, articles and books are now available. At this stage Western practitioners should take these studies into consideration instead of describing the Chinese tradition as an ahistorical continuum that contains all techniques, schools, and teachers. The various presentations of women's qigong discussed below would have greatly benefited from such consideration.

"Nüzi Qigong"

This DVD is by the physician and qigong teacher Liu Yafei, the daughter of Liu Guizhen, the cadre responsible for the transition from *neidan* to qigong. Liu Yafei works at the Beidaihe sanatorium founded by her father and teaches widely abroad, mainly in Europe, but has not yet published Western language books on her practice. In her DVD and classes she keeps the practice firmly within the realm of medicine and healing, downplaying any spiritual or religious elements. This stance is partly related to the transformation that alchemical techniques underwent during the Republican and Communist periods and partly due to the fact

that her father had been harshly criticized for his involvement in the development of qigong. The repression of Falungong and various qigong forms in China today and the limits of religious expression also play a role.

Still, there are obvious similarities in Liu's terminology and traditional *nüdan* texts, starting with the cosmological positioning and defining of men and women. "Men are strong and refine their *qi*, women are soft and refine their blood. Women have inner soft beauty. Men are high mountains, women are flowing water." Both practices pay specific attention to the breasts, and especially to the point between them, historically considered the starting point for female practice and the activating point for women. Both also include extensive and repeated breast massages. In addition, they pay attention to the lower abdomen, and to the Meeting Yin (*huiyin*) point at the perineum. All of these points are located on an extraordinary vessel (Renmai, Dumai, Chongmai, or Daimai). According to Liu, they are essential for female health because they cross the front part of the body and intersect on the abdomen. She thus applies *nüdan* knowledge to Chinese medical readings of the body.

Another element essential in both practices is blood. However, whereas *nüdan* sees blood as a pool of energy to be transformed, *nüzi qigong* supports its normal function. The exercises accordingly serve to regulate menstruation and female hormones, to eliminate breast problems like cysts, to help in recovery after breast cancer as well as during pregnancy and menopause, and generally to maintain and improve the blood and energy flow in the body.

Not all of *nüzi qigong* derives from *nüdan*, though. Many elements also come from *neiyang gong*, internal nourishing, the other form of qigong Liu teaches. Her language in all cases is eminently biomedical, speaking of different health problems and of how this practice can help solve them. The questions asked by the practitioners during classes are equally focused on health and healing. No mention is made of a spiritual or religious dimension of this practice.

"Radiant Lotus"

Daisy Lee is a qigong instructor certified by the National Qigong Association. The DVD, after showing a class of her students performing a se-

ries of exercises specific to female health, contains an interview on her practice. Lee notes that Radiant Lotus is designed specifically for women and addresses health issues unique to women like perimenopause, menopause, hot flashes, painful periods, low back pain, swollen ankles, intense emotions, as well as uterine and breast tumors. This is achieved through a series of movements, divided into four routines, all featured on the DVD: 1. Shaking and cupping 2. Self-massage (of breasts and reproductive organs) 2. Vibrational sound healing 4. Kwan Yin closing.

The first series of movements starts by tapping the center of the chest. Lee describes this center biomedically as the thymus gland. *Nüdan* texts call it the "milk stream" (*ruxi*) and name it as the starting point of practice and as one of the main locations where the practice returns. The next movements include cupping the breasts, the neck, face, and abdomen, as well as the legs; special attention is given to breasts and ovaries, echoing *nüdan* materials. The second section describes a massage routine which includes, among others: ovarian, abdominal, groin, vaginal, kidneys, and breasts. All these areas are essential in *nüdan* practice. The movements, moreover, are performed nine times, which is also the typical number of repetitions in *the nüdan* tradition.

Daisy Lee too uses biomedical language (thymus gland, ovaries, perimenopause, etc.) to talk about the locations as well as the effects of the practice, and she does not dwell on spiritual effects. However, the fact that she uses Tibetan vibrational sound healing as well as the Kwan Yin (Guanyin) closing, reflects the fact that spiritual practices have been integrated into a health routine. She does not say who developed the "Radiant Lotus" method nor does she discuss the mixing of Daoist (*nüdan*), Chinese Buddhist (Guanyin) and Tibetan Buddhist (sound healing) elements.

Both Lee and Liu Yafei, speak of women's yin nature and define it in a similar way to *nüdan* manuals, as soft, flowing, and internally beautiful. Both note that this nature may be more attuned to natural processes and therefore be better suited to accomplish a qigong routine. "There is a natural flow in a women's body that helps in how you move in qigong. ...you find that women are more naturally drawn to qigong" (Lee, Intro.). This is, not surprisingly, what *nüdan* texts already say, albeit in different terms, in the eighteenth century. However, while Lee sees this as "a place of empowerment for women," the old texts uses the

“special predisposition of women” to maintain a woman’s place in society: in the home and away from the public eye; not a place of empowerment but a reiteration of the status quo.

It is interesting to note that both Liu Yafei’s and Daisy Lee’s instructional DVDs repeat many exercises and focus on locations featured in *nüdan* texts yet do not resemble each other very much. Both techniques, it appears, have a similar source, but have been refined and influenced by other traditions.

Mantak Chia

Mantak Chia was one of the first practitioners to bring *neidan*, or inner alchemy, to America in the 1970s. Since then, he has trained many Western practitioners to becoming full instructors while also publishing—in close cooperation with Michael Winn—a series of books that have strongly influenced the field of spiritual healing. Chia’s teachings have had a large impact on how Chinese healing and spiritual techniques are understood and adapted in the West. This is how he is described on many online sites selling his books:

A student of several Taoist masters, Mantak Chia founded the Universal Healing Tao System in 1979 and has taught and certified tens of thousands of students and instructors from all over the world. He is the director of the Tao Garden Integrative Medicine Health Spa and Resort training center in northern Thailand and the author of 31 books, including *Fusion of the Five Elements*, *Cosmic Fusion*, and the bestselling *The Multi-Orgasmic Man*.

In his many publications, Chia talks about inner alchemy and about the spiritual goals of the practice. His “Fusion of the Eight Psychic Channels: Opening and Sealing the Energy Body” describes the practice: “Advanced Inner Alchemy exercises that promote the free flow of energy throughout the body in preparation for the Practice of the Immortal Tao.” He credits several teachers for his knowledge of *neidan* practices, among whom Yi Yun “One Cloud Hermit” from Lone White Mountain, Cheng Yaolun and Pan Yu.. However he does not give detailed explanation of their histories or of how the transmission of their knowledge (oral

or written) to him took place.² He does mention, however, that these teachers were already mixing elements from Daoism, Buddhism and Thai boxing in their teaching. To this knowledge, he added intensive study of Western medicine and anatomy.

Thus, while Chia's publications make full use of the *neidan* ideology both in terminology and in the sequence of the practice, he also employs biomedical language. For example, "When fully developed, the pineal gland becomes the compass that guides the spirit to the primeval Tao" (2005, 116). Differently from traditional *neidan* and *nüdan* manuals, he provides a profusion of details about the physical practices with many diagrams of the body, and especially of the genital area, and explains both practices and expected physical reactions in Western medical terms. Yet, he still describes the results in terms of transcendence, spirituality, and spiritual union. Thus Chia successfully maintains the esoteric nature and appeal of *neidan* while explaining its efficacy in a way that appeals to a Western audience.

In his *Healing Love through the Tao* (2005) on female practice, the technical language and description of the female body present several similarities to *nüdan*, starting with his use of language and the importance given to specific body locations: breasts and breast massages, ovaries, Governing and Conception Vessels (Dumai and Renmai)—all essential to female energy. He also presents an extensive discussion of sexual feelings; here is where his work differs significantly from traditional *nüdan* as well as from Liu Yafei's and Daisy Lee's modern take. Chia's goal is to teach how to develop a better sexual relationship with a male partner through the strengthening of internal energy. *Nüdan* teachings, in contrast, acknowledge the emergence of sexual feelings during the practice, but teach the practitioner (who does not practice jointly with a partner) how not to dwell on them but sublimate them.

Last but not least, traditional *nüdan* texts talk at length about the practice of "Slaying the Red Dragon," a technique of breast massage and

² Mantak Chia's student and collaborator Michael Winn, a teacher in his own right, has recently attempted to give a more thorough account of Chia's affiliation with Master One Cloud, as well as to describe openly the "appropriation of Daoist Internal Alchemy by Westerners" (Winn 20090). This is a welcome shift.

internal visualization that results in the gradual disappearance of the menses. This is definitely not the message in Chia's book. While "Slaying the Red Dragon" is the title of Chia's video where he, his wife Maneewan, and one of their female practitioners describe their version of female practice., the video does not discuss the disappearance of the menses. Instead, it focuses on "a Taoist way to control menstruation" attained through the strengthening of female sexual power with specific techniques like meditation, breast massage, vaginal massage, and the strengthening of the perineal muscles with external devices.

In other words, the video pairs visualization techniques and breast massages from traditional *nüdan* with sexual techniques that were never part of this traditionally solo technique to form an entirely new way of female sexual empowerment. Throughout video and book, he maintains a good balance between spirituality, sexuality, and health. The work remains a point of reference for all later books on *neidan*, qigong, and sexual health by other practitioners, providing a strong focus on exercises for pelvic floor health, ovarian and breast massage, and female sexuality. His work differs from other recent books on female qigong, which all give sound exercises for the female body—some for specific illnesses, others for specific life phases— in that the latter have few spiritual overtones. Some manuals focus on the physical benefits of the practice alone, while others only talk about sexuality. Yet he has in common with them his overall ahistorical perspective, which holds true for this kind of literature in general.

"Earth Qigong for Women"

Tina Zhang says right away: "Earth Qigong is based on a special medical qigong developed and perfected over the course of 1,700 years by Daoists, Traditional Chinese medicine doctors, and qigong experts in China to address the needs of a woman's unique anatomy" (2008, ix). She thereby equalizes Daoists, Chinese medical doctors, and qigong practitioners, mixing traditions and time periods into one unquestioned bundle. Nor does she explain where the term "Earth Qigong" comes from or what it means, whether she coined it herself or whether it is linked to a traditional Chinese school. Furthermore, the title of the book has the

Chinese subtitle *Kungong*, which can be translated as "feminine practice," but it not explained either.

Still, Zhang gives a general survey of the development of qigong and healing techniques in China, then focuses specifically on techniques for women. She herself describes Earth Qigong :

This qigong program is designed to provide more movement than other qigong sets, some of which are based on seated meditation and do very little in motion. The basic goal of this program is to help women combat stiffness and the sedentary life that's become too common. Its gentle approach helps women relax. Within this practice the deeper qi work will give positive energy to women, because it has the cultivation of the female center of qi as its main goal. (2008, 48)

Zhang offers an apparently effective and comprehensive series of practices for women, called "The Earth Energy: Cultivating Female Energy," "Creating Pelvic Health and Helping the Liver," and "The Spirit of Vitality: Bringing out the Real Female Spirit." These series focus on the pelvic area and on solving problems related to menstruation, breast swelling, and pre- and post-partum complications. Her sequences combine different styles of qigong while focusing on areas of specific female interest. She also discusses the importance of acupoints for women's health, notably Meeting Yin at the perineum, Ocean of Qi (*qihai*) under the umbilicus, and Gate of Life (*mingmen*) between the kidneys in the back.

Earth qigong includes several qi movements that exercise or massage the internal and external organs of the female body, some of which are not addressed in most other qigong routines or forms. These movement purposely move the blood and cultivate more of the female energy that women naturally have in their bodies in order to gain more inner power to ease and arrest uncomfortable symptoms during the different stages of menstruation, pregnancy, perimenopause and menopause. (2008, 49)

Zhang's book betrays a deep knowledge of female physiology and offers good practical advice, but as usual lacks historical perspective.

For Health and Longevity

This book by Deborah Davis addresses women over forty and divides into sections according to age (40 to 49; 50 to 64; 65 and over). It, too, focuses on specifically female concerns like pre-menstrual syndrome, breast-health, depression, menopause, insomnia, osteoporosis, heart health, and sexual issues. Davis combines her extensive knowledge of both qigong and women's health to produce a manual of general qigong exercises that are beneficial to a woman's body. Unlike both traditional *nüdan*, Liu's *nüzi qigong* and Chia's guidelines, her practices focus less on specifically "female" areas of the body and instead devote practices to whole-body health. Still, even Davis acknowledges that the "Uterine Palace" (*zigong*) is fundamental in the female body, and has exercises called "Soothing the Middle", "Renmai Massage" and "Pelvic Floor Lift" that focus on the middle of the body.

Qigong for Women

Dominique Ferraro, like Deborah Davis, uses her extensive knowledge of qigong and Chinese healing techniques, including her profound understanding of acupuncture, and applies it to the female body. The last two chapters of her book are devoted to "Qigong and Sexuality" and "Common Physical Problems of Women." The chapter on sexuality introduces the concept of a healthy sexuality between men and women, recalling the tradition of Chinese sexual manuals; it refers directly to Mantak Chia's work, then notes the importance of blood and its proper flow. The chapter on common ailments concentrates on bones, joints, teeth, memory, and hearing; only at the end does it turn to more specific gynecological problems and pregnancy. Again, this is a good manual for general health, but the advice is often not specific to women. Plus, as Davis's work, her book is eminently interested in physical sequences and effects and cares less about the history or cultural background.

A Woman's Qigong Guide

This book by Yangling Lee Johnson (2001), as noted in the title, is not only about qigong but also about movement, diet, and herbs—albeit within the Chinese tradition. It provides a fairly long historical introduction, however, it is often marred by an ahistorical perspective about the development of Chinese medicine and qigong. The introduction also includes a personal perspective, and Johnson shares her story of self-healing during the Cultural Revolution and the hardship she underwent when relocating to the U.S.

Unlike other books of this kind, this work does not consist largely of detailed descriptions of practice postures. Only in Chapter 5 does she begin to talk about "short forms," i.e., quick postures to do in the morning, in the car, at work, outside, etc. These quick forms deal with problems such as sterility, depression, weight loss, the flu, amenorrhea, and the like. Johnson's book contains various passages she herself translates from Daoist and Chinese medical texts, scattering advice about almost everything: alcohol intake, work, nails, sexual activity, sleeping, sweating, dieting, and more. The book concentrate on the physiology of women or on specific areas of the female body. In sum, it is not quite a qigong guide for women as advertised in the title, but rather a general guide on wellbeing for women that mixes psychological, dietary, and energetical advice.

The White Tigress

Hsi Lai is the Chinese pen name of Stuart Alve Olson, director of the Phoenix Taoist Center. A long-term student of taiji quan master T. T. Liang, he has also published variously on that subject. His two books on women's practice (2001; 2006) are not about qigong for women, but rather present a special sexual technique for women that the author claims to be of Chinese origin. Despite this, none of the so-called White Tigress techniques described here match—at least to my knowledge—anything in Chinese traditional sexual techniques described in publicly known manuals since the Han period.

Like many other practitioners, Hsi Lai too does not provide a clear reference to existing Chinese sources in the tradition he makes his own,

and does not reveal the full names and affiliation of the people who transmitted this tradition to him. He explains this by saying that these texts are secret and have been made available only to him— but then proceeds to make their contents public in books and workshops. In the introduction to both volumes, he gives a generic explanation of Daoism, *neidan*, and sexual techniques as a background to his White Tigress practice, then outlines various techniques that involve areas of the female body also the focus in *nüdan* works and women's qigong: breasts, ovaries, and perineum. However, this tradition and the techniques associated with it have very little to do with *nüdan*.

Hsi Lai's interests, unlike other authors in this field, seem to lie not in women's health per se, but in women's spiritual achievement through sexual practices. The empowerment he offers, however, seems to have very sexist overtones.

* * *

In sum, I find that the field of women's qigong publications in Western Languages has a lot of room to grow. Some of the above publications are just beginning to discuss what it means to practice *neidan* and qigong as a woman, what are the important areas to concentrate on, and where the practice should take us. In most of the publications reviewed, there is particular attention to female physiology and to ailments that are specific to women, and there are a variety of techniques offered to relieve them. Some concentrate on health, other on sexuality, others again mix healing, sexuality and spirituality. Some are more thorough than others, but all of them, to a certain extent, lack historical perspective. Though I realize that not all are meant to include historical introductions to the field, paying attention to the historical significance and development of a tradition, as well as describing one's affiliations with contemporary masters and one's place in that tradition, puts the physical practice in a better context and allows the practitioner and student to better appreciate and understand what they are doing and why. I hope that more practitioners will open to all of us their process of learning, appropriation and adaptation of Chinese traditions. This will be beneficial to practitioners, students and historians.

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Wudang Mountain and the Modernization of Daoism¹

JEAN DEBERNARDI

Both the modern nation-state and global networks and organizations have contributed to the modern transformation of religions. In particular, the development of global capitalism has provided unprecedented financial means and technologies of communication to religious leaders. These have enabled entrepreneurial religious leaders of many religions—including Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, but also many other religious groups—to rework their organizations, develop their networks, and transform their practices. In this paper, I consider Wudang Mountain Daoism in light of these new organizational forms, networks, and practices. I will discuss the contribution that Wudang Mountain Daoism makes to China's civilizational culture, to world culture, and to religious culture.²

¹ I base this paper on research conducted with support from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Special thanks are due to my collaborators in this project Prof. Dong Luo and Dr. Wu Xu, to Abbott Li, to Dean Deng Zhenglai at Fudan University, to the Chinese Taoist Association and the organizers of the International Forum on the *Daodejing*, including especially Leong Tak-wah, and in Singapore to the Singapore Taoist Federation, Chong Kwang-tong (Wei-yi), Xu Li-ying, and Victor Yue. I presented an earlier version of this paper at a conference on the theme "Chinese Social Science in a Global Age" at the National Institute for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Fudan University December 5-8, 2008 and published a translation in *The Chinese Journal of Social Science* (DeBernardi 2009).

² Anthropological contributions to the study of modernity and transnationalism that have influenced this research project include Appadurai (1996); Eisenstadt and Schluchter (1998); Hannerz (1992; 1996); and Sahlins (1998; 1999)

Civilizational Culture

At present there is a drive to brand China as a modern and progressive place and to not place too much emphasis on its history. Nonetheless, undoubtedly China's political leaders are mobilizing elements of China's civilizational culture as a resource as a strategy to build stronger links with Chinese in 'greater China.' Although Maoism divided them from the Chinese in Southeast Asia, for example, who were early participants in the growth of the capitalist world system, China's civilizational traditions can serve as a potential source of shared values. Confucianism, for example, forms a supranational link with a number of Asian countries, including countries like Singapore and Taiwan that have self-consciously sought to teach and promote modernist forms of Confucian ideology.

Recently China's political leaders have also mobilized civilizational culture, using what Harvard professor Joseph Nye has called 'soft power' to gain global influence. For example, when China builds Confucius Institutes throughout the world, they use the name 'Confucius' to tap into the cosmopolitan prestige of their great sage and to symbolize Chinese values. At the same time, the Chinese government's goal is not only culture but also economic: to encourage Chinese language learning outside China. Although this might be the final aim, nonetheless the government is drawing on civilizational tradition to build this link.

The government has also recently formed the China Religious Culture Communication Association as a non-profit social organization. The association was formed to "strengthen and promote contacts and exchanges between members of the religious sector in the Chinese mainland and their counterparts in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao, as well as in other countries and regions; to widely make friends, increase friendship and promote cooperation; to jointly unearth positive and beneficial religious content; and to carry forward and promote China's traditional culture." In cooperation with religious groups, this association has helped to organize and promote several international conferences, including one on Buddhism, and the International Forum on the *Daode jing* in 2007 that I discuss in more detail below. I think it significant that with few exceptions, the participants at this International Forum were primarily Chinese from Mainland China and diaspora Chinese

from Greater China—in particular Singapore and Taiwan, and North America.

Undoubtedly, Daoism makes an important contribution to China's civilizational culture, especially within Greater China. Modern Daoist leaders often assert that Daoism is the root of Chinese culture and claim certain symbols and practices as distinctive to their religion. The yin/yang symbol is of course globally recognized. In addition, Wudang Mountain offers visitors Daoist tea culture, Daoist music, Daoist calligraphy, Daoist martial arts, and a variety of commodities like Taiji sword.

Cosmopolitan Culture

In addition to China's civilizational culture, Daoism also engages modern cosmopolitan world culture. Globalization in the period of early modernity enabled scholars to amass an encyclopedic knowledge of the world's cultures. European Enlightenment scholars translated the sacred texts of the world's diverse religions. They promoted knowledge of the world's cultures, including religious cultures like Daoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, as a way to overcome localism in favor of the notion of a universal human fellowship. Today, Daoism's contribution to world cosmopolitan culture includes its most famous sacred text, the *Daode jing*, its sacred sites, including Wudang Mountain, and Taijiquan, which is Wudang Mountain's contribution to the global field of martial arts. Let me briefly discuss each of these.

Starting in the 19th century, we find individuals and groups in Europe that celebrated Asian religions, translating the so-called Sacred Books of the East, including classic works of Confucius, Buddhism, Hinduisim, and Daoism. Books like the *Analects*, the *Daode jing*, and the Buddhist sutras are widely taught in Chinese religions classes throughout Europe and North America. They are read not only to gain insight into Chinese culture, but as classics of world literature.

Daoists are aware of the global importance of the *Daode jing*, and many Daoist temples now offer free copies of the *Daode jing*. In recognition of the global importance of this book, in 2007, the China Religious Communication Office together with the China Daoist Federation organized an International Forum on the *Daode jing* in Xi'an and Hong Kong.

The forum included a special ceremony at Louguantai, at the place

where Laozi is said to have created the *Daode jing*. The Forum included participants from China and greater China, but also North America and Europe, who in their lectures related the *Daode jing* to the environment, to social harmony, to health practices and to business. The two-city conference also included an exhibit of editions and translations of the *Daode jing* in Hong Kong. This event highlighted the importance of the *Daode jing* as a classic of world literature.

In advance of the Forum, Daoists in Hong Kong organized a special event in a stadium—a mass recitation of the *Daode jing*. In so doing, they sought recognition in the Guinness Book of World Records for the “most people reading aloud simultaneously in one location”. The forum itself closed with a mass recitation of the *Daode jing*. These events highlighted a fact not widely known in the west, namely that students of the *Daode jing* memorized and recited it. In the cosmopolitan field of practice, the *Daode jing* has global renown, and Daoists now promote it a text on a par with the Christian Bible.

World Heritage Sites

With the creation of the UNESCO World Heritage program, cosmopolitan world culture now also includes historic sites like the Ancient Building Complex at Wudang Mountain. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Program promotes a sense of cosmopolitan citizenship not limited to the nation state. When a country adds a site like Wudang Mountain to the UNESCO world heritage list, they identify it as important not just as a national treasure but also as a global treasure. Being on the list should mean that the place is preserved and sheltered against the pressures of global capitalism, whose developers see more profit in building new structures than preserving old ones.

Cultural historian Thomas Macho observed that cultures are islands in the ocean of oblivion (Assmann 2006, 81). As a form of cultural memory, religious traditions seek to perpetuate memories of the past and expectations of the future through text, story, the preservation of sacred sites, and above all ritual. As civilizations change, we also find wilful acts of forgetting. And people undoubtedly remake their traditions for new generations.

What, then, do we make of the recent reconstruction of Jingle Palace in Danjiangkou? The original Jingle Palace, one of eight grand palaces at Wudang Mountain, no longer exists. The new Jingle Palace, a replica built in a new location, is something quite different from the building that it replaces. Some might regard it as an anachronism, or an expression of nostalgia, or even kitsch. I speculate that many Westerners would conclude that the reconstruction was a fake, forgetting perhaps that many heritage buildings in European cities were rebuilt after being destroyed by bombs in World War II.

Others would see it as a commercial rather than religious venture. They would not be entirely mistaken: people spoke of potential revenues from charging an admission fee, and anticipated that it would enhance tourism in the small city, which is best known for Danjiangkou Dam. But despite all this, the use of the temple is traditional: when the Daoist priest perform their rituals, when local people fill the temple and collect oracles, when local officials willingly participate in elaborate ritual events, and when businessmen offer financial patronage, this temple resembles Chinese temples throughout the world.

Martial Arts

Finally, Wudang Mountain's physical culture—martial arts—is a major contribution to cosmopolitan world culture. Indeed, in the last two decades, Wudang Mountain martial arts has extended its influence worldwide.

In the late 1970s, a small handful of students went to Wudang Mountain to study martial arts with a resident master. They formed a school next to the main temple, and in 2002, the Wudang Mountain performance group made their first trip to North America. By 2007, the school had many more international students and the performance group traveled widely in Asia and North America. (I saw them perform, for example, in Hong Kong at the International Conference on the *Daode jing*, and also in Singapore at the 90th Anniversary of the Singapore City God Temple.) They display the performance style that they have developed on a global stage, and their form of Taijiquan represents Wudang Mountain martial arts to the world. Wudang Mountain's Daoists are justifiably proud of the fact that the Daoist religion has made a contribution

to cosmopolitan world culture and also aware of the global fame and popularity of Chinese martial arts.

Wudang Mountain and the Fujian Diaspora

Wudang Mountain is a historic site of national and global interest. But Wudang Mountain also enjoys special popularity among Chinese from Fujian, Taiwan, and the Fujian diaspora in Southeast Asia. Globalization allows them an unprecedented opportunity to visit Wudang Mountain, which for some Daoists is as important a sacred site as the Holy Land is for Christians or Bodhgaya—the place where Buddha reached enlightenment—is for Buddhists. Consequently it is predictable that many pilgrim groups come from Fujian, Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

For the Taiwanese, the veneration of Zhenwu has deep historical roots. Ming loyalist Zheng Chenggong built a Zhenwu temple next to his headquarters at Fort Provintia in what is today Tainan City.³ Many temples throughout Taiwan are dedicated to him, and his veneration also is widespread in Southeast Asia, where some call him Shangdi Gong. Some Nine Emperor God temples regard him as the elder of the Nine Emperor Gods, who are the focus of a distinctive temple tradition in Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore (see DeBernardi 2004; Wang N.d.).⁴

Although they do not live in a single territorial region, nonetheless diaspora Fujianese share linguistic, cultural and historical traditions stemming from their homeland in Fujian Province. Fujian-speaking peoples are like the Jewish people in recognizing their shared traditions while living in diaspora. Fujian regional language is not a written language; their religious culture is among their most important shared cultural practices, including a range of performing arts from opera and

³ A project of modernization led to the demolition of the original Zhenwu temple in Tainan. When the government demolished the temple to build a school, a smaller temple was built nearby to replace the original temple. A small sign identifies it as a cultural relic, but no mention is made of the demolition of the original temple, a story that temple members recounted in conversation.

⁴ I speculate that Xuantian shangdi is the Heaven and Earth Society's "Great Ancestor," a deity whose identity is mysterious, but who died on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, just like the god, who is said to have ascended to heaven on that day. See DeBernardi 2004, ch. 8.

puppet theatre to exorcistic dramas. They may explore those shared traditions through religious pilgrimage. Although the overseas pilgrim's destination is most likely to be Fujian province, nonetheless they sometimes make the more difficult journey to Wudang Mountain. They do so because they regard this temple complex as the mother temple for veneration of one of their most important deities, Zhenwu (also known as Xuantian dadi). Increasingly, we also find ritual performers and Wudang martial artists visiting Chinese temples in temples in Southeast Asia and Taiwan.

Wudang Daoism in a Global Era

Finally, I wish to discuss the contemporary situation of the Daoist religion and specifically the priests, nuns and martial arts performers of Wudang Mountain in a global context. Wudang Mountain is one of a wide network of Daoist sacred sites, and a popular destination for pilgrims and tourists. But the world-retreating Daoists of Wudang Mountain also goes out into the world. The priest and nuns are linked into national and international networks of Daoist practitioners and they often travel to display their rituals and to perform martial arts.

Their visits have made an important contribution to the revival of Daoism in Southeast Asia. In Singapore and Malaysia, Daoism has waned in popularity among educated Chinese for decades due to the stigma that attaches to Chinese popular religion. In modern societies, governments have often labelled popular religious practices as superstitious, backward, and wasteful. At the same time, many Chinese have had no opportunity to study the foundations of philosophical Daoism.

Many literate Chinese Malaysians and Singaporeans have elected to participate in rationalized forms of Buddhist religious practice, to convert to Christianity (many joining charismatic Christian churches), or to become "free thinkers" (DeBernardi 2008a). With increasing contact between Daoists in Southeast Asia and China, however, this situation appears to be changing. Chinese in Southeast Asia have long purchased and read religious literature produced in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Daoist priests and nuns in China now recognize the need for education, public outreach and even proselytism. Their books and teachings now influence a growing number of Chinese educated Daoists in Southeast Asia, who

are themselves seeking to reform the practices of religious Daoism in their own communities (DeBernardi 2008b).

Mass media also developed into a powerful tool for globalizing the influence of new forms of Daoist practice. These include VCDs, picture albums, and scholarly and popular books. Many are for sale at Wudang Mountain, where visitors may buy them at a variety of small stores. We also find for sale martial arts paraphernalia like Taiji quan swords but also items regarded as having special potency because they are bought at a sacred site, including statues of deities and incense. Some of these commodities are distributed or sold outside China, as when performers from the Mainland who are engaged to perform at festivals in Singapore or Malaysia offer VCDs for sale.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have used the modernization of Wudang Mountain Daoist as an example of religious modernity in a global era. Using that example, I have sought to demonstrate that Daoism has new significance in a globalized world. Wudang Mountain Daoism contributes to diverse modern projects, from world cosmopolitan culture to the promotion of civilizational values. At the same time, Daoist symbols and practices transmit cultural memories and traditions in diasporic cultures. Through the study of Wudang Mountain, we can learn what complex network relationships modern Daoists create and maintain in this remarkable global era.



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- Yen Hsüeh-cheng, Stephen Eskildsen

Dissertations

Yang Liu, “Images of Female Daoists in Tang and Song Poetry” (Dec. 2010), University of British Columbia, supervised by Jerry Schmidt (yangl@interchange.ubc.ca)

This dissertation is a literary study that aims to better understand the lives of female Daoists who lived during the period ranging from the eighth to twelfth centuries. Together with an examination of their various embodiments in lyric poetry, this study will include historical background and a discussion of the lives and situations of female Daoists. In addition, this dissertation considers images of Daoist nuns as historical persons, rather than Daoist deities and mythical figures in historical texts and literary creations. Accordingly, in this work, I will not deal with topics such as the Divine Mother of the West, the Daoist Mother, Dipper Mother, goddesses and fairies. Since serious studies on women’s studies and religious theories are already available, I will provide a picture of female Daoists through their own poetic verses, as well as by some male poets both within and without the Daoist religion from the Tang to Song Dynasties.

Therefore, this study will not only explore poetic works by some well-known female clerics of the Tang and Song Dynasties, including Yu Xuanji 魚玄機, Li Ye 李冶, Yuan Chun 元淳, Cao Wenyi 曹文逸 and Sun Bu-er 孫不二, but also examine specific works written by a number of famous male poets such as Li Bai 李白, Han Yü 韓愈, Li He 李賀, Yuan Zhen 元稹 and Li Shangyin 李商隱 for the purpose of demonstrating how learned men, the group with whom female Daoists interacted most frequently, appreciated and portrayed these special women in their poetry. Biographical information, social background and literary analysis will be provided alongside the translated poems. It is hoped that this study will contribute to a more complete understanding of female Daoists in Chinese history.

Yu Ping Luk, “Empresses, Religious Patronage and the Imperial Image during Ming China: the *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang* (1493)” (Summer 2010), St Catherine’s College, University of Oxford, UK, supervised by Craig Clunas (yu-ping.luk@stcatz.ox.ac.uk)

The monumental *Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang* (1493) in the San Diego Museum of Art, a highlight at the *Taoism and the Arts of China* exhibition in 2000, is a rare record of the ordination of the consort of the Hongzhi emperor (r. 1488-1505) by the Orthodox Unity institution. At over 27 metres in width, the *Ordination Scroll* records in both text and images the religious event through which the empress was incepted as a realized being into the celestial realm.

My research is an in-depth study of the *Ordination Scroll*, including its long inscription for which a complete translation is given. It compares the scroll to other religious documents and images, and situates it within the practice of imperial ordinations. It also explores broader questions raised by the existence of the *Ordination Scroll*: What was the status of the Orthodox Unity institution at court during the Ming dynasty? In what ways were Ming empresses involved in religious patronage? What possibilities were there for representing the religious persona of Ming imperial women? My research aims to provide a new reading of the *Ordination Scroll* while also addressing its implications for our understanding of imperial religious patronage and the agency of empresses in Ming China.

Research Projects

Daoist Texts Shared with Tantric Buddhists

A rare esoteric (*mijue* 秘訣) Daoist text, from the *Zhengyi Citan* 正一詞壇 collection, illustrates a similarity of Tibetan and Japanese (Tang Dynasty China) Tantric Buddhist rituals with Daoist practice. Identical texts, from the Three Mountain Alliance (Sanshan dixuepai 三山滴血派), are still in use today by Zhengyi Mengwei 正一孟微, Maoshan Shangqing, 茅山上清, and Lingbao Sanwu Dugong 灵宝三五都功 Daoist Masters, along with other Qingwei Wu Leifa 清微五雷法 (Five Thunder-Vajra) and Beidou 北斗 (Northern Dipper) ritual manuals (including 23 *Zhengyi Citan* folios). For details, see *Dokyo hiketsu shūsei* 道教秘訣集成 (1979/2009). The published collection contains five of these documents; the remaining 18 are in press to appear in 2010.

In these three traditions, the efficacy of Thunder-Vajra Meditation requires the use of the Pole Star spirits, i.e., the seven stars of Ursa Major and especially the highly esoteric Pojun 破君 or Gangshen, 罡神. The latter spirit must be summoned to purify and command the use of thunder and lightning. He brings the thunder itself into the body of the Daoist master, storing it in the gall bladder, from where it is summoned forth by drawing talismans with the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth. The text is not complete without oral instructions of the master, showing how this is done.

The text reproduced in the collection comes from a Daoist master in Hunan. It is identical with texts used by Daoists in Taiwan, and in the the “Three Mountain Alliance” 三山滴血派 of Longhu shan, Maoshan and Wudang shan. The purpose of the manual is to show how to summon and command the Pole Star Gangshen spirit of thunder and lightning. It indicates the complex system of pseudo-Sanskrit seed words or mantras (*zhou* 咒) and hand seals or mudras (*shouyin* 手印) used in the highly esoteric, secretive Daoist Thunder-Vajra tradition. The overlap between Daoist and Buddhist practices is intense, and contemporary Daoists are just rediscovering these potent practices.

—Michael Saso

Conferences

The Past, Present, and Future of Daoism

June 18-22, 2009, Wudangshan, Hubei, China

On June 19, the Fifth International Daoist Studies Conference as well as the Intercommunication Meeting among Xuantian Shangdi Temples opened in the town of Wudangshan, located near Danjiang kou City in Hubei. Mt. Wudang is the sacred mountain where the Dark Warrior (Xuantian shangdi 玄天上帝) meditated and ascended to heaven. It is also the cult center for Dark Warrior worshipers all over the world. The Daoist conference was sponsored by Yunyang Teachers College, Shiyan City, Rutgers University, and the Hong Kong Taoist Association. It was also supported by the Wudangshan Town, the Hubei Association of Wudang Culture, the Wudang Daoist Association, Sichuan University, Central China Normal University, and Zhongnan University.

Over 200 participants included 90 scholars from sixteen different countries, notably from the U.S., Germany, France, the U.K., Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and many more. Also present were 100 Daoists from China and Southeast Asia. After the opening ceremony keynote speakers were Mou Zhongjian 牟鍾鑒 on "The Value of the *Daode jing* under the Financial Crisis" and Kristofer Schipper on "The Future of Daoist Studies." Following these, several scholars reported on the current state of Daoist Studies in their countries and on ongoing research projects. Participants of this Roundtable included: Stephen Bokenkamp, Hong Baijian 洪百坚, Wang Ka 王卡, YangLizhi 杨立志, Vincent Goossaert, Mori Yuria 森由利亚, Terry Kleeman, and Livia Kohn.

For three days after this, panels opened on a large variety of topics, including state and society, ethics, modernity, rites and rituals, literature, art and architecture, iconography, martial arts, women, pilgrimage, health and longevity practices, as well as local studies of Daoist sects. Discussions were vivid and engaged, and the conference served as an important channel of communication and exchange. Scholars discovered new motivations, methodologies, and trends; they enjoyed making seeing old friends and making new ones.

On June 21, participants took an all-day excursion to the temples of Mt. Wudang. We visited Raven Hill (Wuya ling 烏鴉嶺) and overlooked South Cliff Palace (Nanyan gong 南岩宮) and its Dragon-headed Incense Burner (Longtou xiang 龍頭香). We also saw at Plum Shrine (Langmei ci 榔梅祠) and learned how the fruit sent to the Emperor was regarded as lucky and has continued to bring good fortune to the mountain. We spent the long time in Purple Heaven Palace (Zixiao gong 紫霄宮), participating in a Quanzhen ceremony to honor Daoist gods and give thanks and blessings. Daoist food of, organic vegetables, healthy for long life and immortality, made an fabulous lunch. Then we visited the Golden Peak (Jinding 金頂) and paid our respects to the Dark Warrior. After that we participated in an hour-long Zhengyi ceremony at in the temple near the foot of Goldne Peak, enjoying the ritual and receiving more blessings.

The closing ceremony was held at 5:30 on June 21. Yang Lizhi, President of Yunyang Teachers College, delivered the closing speech. He praised the success of the conference—excellent in academic communication and fruitful in presentations and new ideas as well as promoting the communicatino among Xuantian Shangdi Temples. As the representative of the Sixth Conference, Livia Kohn invited scholars to come to Los Angeles in 2010. A good time was had by all.

— Chen Mei

The First International Summit on Laozi and Daoist Culture

November 5-6, Beijing, China

The two-day summit, with the theme of “Daoism, Science, Harmony, Health,” was sponsored by the China Research Association of Laozi Daoism Culture (CRALDC), an association under the auspices of China Academy of Social Sciences. Fulfilling the guideline of “creating a harmonious society together,” over 600 participants explored the strategic meaning of what Daoist innovation means to the world. They also reflected on the prospects of the Daoist culture in the 21st century.



Daoists from both home and abroad, mostly academics and scholars, submitted more than 240 papers to the summit organizers. “We are here to create an international platform for cultural exchange,” said Hu Fuchen, the current president, in his speech at the opening ceremony in the Great Hall of the People. He has several ambitions. “We want to promote Laozi’s culture of Daoism around the world, at any cost. We dare to innovate, dare to reform. We are to establish domestic and overseas Laozi institutes and Daoist cultural centers, which can exhibit the soft power of China.” His efforts are similar to the establishment of Confucius institutes around the world.

Hu is convinced that in an era of global multi-polarity, with terrorist threats, the financial crisis and pollution, Daoism will be a universal culture. He believes his association, with help from academics around the globe, has a mission to re-discover and revive the timeless philosophy and wisdom for the world peace.

Daoism, branching from Laozi with his Daoist “bible,” the *Daode jing*, is a religion and collection of philosophies, values, traditions, and

concepts indigenous to Chinese society. It has influenced the development of China and Chinese thought for over 2,000 years. The *Daode jing* is one of the most-read books in the world, second only to the Bible, and has attracted many followers and practitioners from around the globe.

"My own belief is that Daoism's contribution to the world will lie in what it can offer to an understanding of religious experiences and the human encounter with the numinal," says Ronnie Littlejohn of Belmont University. "I am not suggesting that Daoism will replace the world systems of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or Buddhism. Nor do I suggest that Daoism be considered as another religion alongside these, but I do think it may well bring forward reports of experiences that may provide new resources for a revitalization of spiritual consciousness globally," Littlejohn writes.

Practitioner Stephan Wik from The Wuji Centre in Belgium echoed this belief in a paper entitled "Daoism and its Role in Supporting Sustainable Modern Relationships." Wik notes, "We live in changing, challenging times and human relationships are not immune from the stresses and strains that we, and our planet, are experiencing. I believe that the ancient Daoist arts and wisdom have a profound role to play in offering tools and techniques to anyone wishing to create a more resilient, healthy and enjoyable personal relationship."

For more details, see:

http://www.china.org.cn/arts/2009-11/11/content_18869841.htm

<http://news.sina.com.cn/w/2009-11-07/091416569963s.shtml>

<http://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/news/2009/11-09/1953960.shtml>

<http://epaper.xplus.com/papers/zjwb/20091107/n18.shtml>

— Conference Organizers

Summit Excursion to Laozi's Birthplace

November 7-11, Zhengzhou, Henan

After a 16-hour bus trip, participants arrived at 1:30 in the morning to be treated to a full banquet and various formal speeches. The next day, everyone got back on the bus for a 5-hour ride to Luyi, where more speeches and photo-shoots awaited. There was very little time to see anything of

cultural or Daoist interest, but there was another 5-hour bus ride to return to the hotel. The following day everyone went to the Buddhist grottoes near Luoyang, which was only 2 hours away. As there was no official program, participants had a much quieter time and enjoyed the sights.

The day after that, a trip to the Shanshan Assembly Hall, the Iron Tower, and the Yanqing Daoist Temple was scheduled, plus a boat trip on the Yellow River. The latter was cancelled due to cold and snow, and the other destinations were replaced by a visit to the Qingming Shanghe Gardens (a theme park) in addition to the Iron Tower. After returning to the hotel at 4:30 pm, everyone had to go on the bus one more time for the closing ceremony, which was held at a big mall, with newly built recreation grounds and accommodations. Erected by Mr. Zhu Tiejue, the sponsor of both the Summit and the Excursion, as a commercial venture, it is the site of future meetings, such as the Daoist Salon in March, 2010.

For more details as well as pictures, go to <ftp://poi.homeftp.net> and look under "Beijing Conference Nov. 2009." Also, see Jessica Sommar's blog: <http://jessgoestochina.space.live.com>.

—Jennifer Lundin Ritchie

Southeast Early China Roundtable

October 23-25, University of Georgia, Athens,

With Michael Puett of Harvard University giving a keynote speech on "Connecting the World, Ritual Theory from Early China," this fourteenth roundtable saw the presentation of fourteen papers in five panels. The section on Daoism featured Mathew Wells on "The Literary and Philosophical Dimensions of Doubt in Ge Hong's *Baopuzi*," Jeffrey L. Richey on "Second Life: The Strange Career of Early Daoist Traditions in Japan," and Livia Kohn on "Ritual Uses of Food in Medieval Daoism." As always, discussion was lively, company cheerful, and food delicious. The next session will be held in Lexington, Kentucky in mid-November. For details, go to <http://faculty.berea.edu/richeyj/seecr.html>.

Upcoming Conferences

Chinese Daoist Salon

March 21-27, 2010, Zhengzhou, Henan

Sponsored by entrepreneur Zhu Tieyu, the Chinese Daoist Salon will be launched in March 2010. Meant to promote Daoist studies and teachings and help establish Daoism as a significant contributor to global intellectual and philosophical developments, it is the first in a series of conferences, workshops, meetings, lectures, and debates on Daoist themes.

The inaugural meeting will bring together about fifty established academics and graduate students from all over the world. Its theme is the application of traditional Daoist thought to contemporary issues, for instance, how Daoist philosophy may open opportunities for spatial or non-linear modes of thinking (e.g. applying yin-yang paradigms), how it operates through inferential or allegorical knowledge construction, and how it playfully integrates humor and seriousness.

Participation is by invitation only. For more details contact a member of the organizational committee: Robin Wang (Loyola Marymount University, USA), Hans-Georg Moeller (University College Cork, Ireland), and Franklin Perkins (DePaul University, USA).

— Robin R. Wang

Daoism Today: Science, Health, Ecology

Loyola Marymount University, June 2-6, 2010

The 6th International Conference on Daoist Studies will be held at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. The theme is the application of Daoist theory and practice in the world today. Keynote speakers are Livia Kohn and Hu Fuchen.

In addition to panels on modern, historical, and cultural topics, there will be various practice workshops. Examples of panels include: Daoist Ecology, Daoist Practice in the US Military, Psychotherapy: The Daoist Way, Daoist Religious Philosophy, and Daoist Meditation.

Among workshops we have Daoist Music, Women's Qigong, Integral Alchemy, Chinese Astrology, and Exorcistic Five Elements.

Practitioners and Chinese health care professionals can receive continuing education credits. Young scholars and Daoist recluses are eligible for scholarships which include a fee waiver plus free on-campus housing. With the financial support of the Hong Kong Taoist Association, a group of fifteen Chinese scholars will be invited. Vendors have the opportunity to exhibit books, CDs, DVDs, and more.

For details and registration, go to www.daoiststudies.org and look under "Conferences," or write to daoconf@gmail.com. The deadline for reduced-fee registration is March 1, 2010.

— Robin R. Wang

Science on Qi

Research Studies

Au-Yeung, S.S.Y., Hui-Chan, C.W.Y., & Tang, J.C.S. (2009). Short-form tai chi improves standing balance of people with chronic stroke. *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair*, 23, 515-522. Compared to members of a control group practicing general exercise, patients participating in a taiji quan group 6 months after a stroke demonstrated superior balance.

Bertisch, S.M., Wee, C.C., Phillips, R.S., & McCarthy, E.P. (2009). Alternative mind-body therapies used by adults with medical conditions. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 66, 511-519.

Birdee, G.S., Wayne, P.M., Davis, R.B., Phillips, R.S., & Yeh, G.Y. (2009). T'ai chi and qigong for health: Patterns of use in the United States. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 15, 969-973. Both studies examine patterns of practice of mind-body therapies and taiji quan and qigong using data from the 2002 National Health Interview Survey Alternative Medicine Supplement (n = 31,044). They estimate that 34.1 million Americans practice mind-body therapies, 2.5 million practice taiji quan and .5 million practice qigong to relieve many common medical and psychological conditions. Multiple health benefits are reported.

Biegel, G.M., Brown, K.W., Shapiro, S.L., & Schubert, C.M. (2009). Mindfulness-based stress reduction for the treatment of adolescent psychiatric outpatients: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77, 855-866. In a population seldom studied by mindfulness researchers, adolescents 14 to 18 years old with a variety of mental health disorders who participated in a mindfulness-based intervention showed greater improvement in symptoms of anxiety, depression, somatic distress, self-esteem, and sleep compared to members of a control group.

Bowen, S., Chawla, N., Collins, S.E., Witkiewitz, K., Hsu, S., Grow, J., Clifasefi, S., Garner, M., Douglass, A., Larimer, M.E., & Marlatt, A. (2009). Mindfulness-based relapse prevention for substance use disorders: A pilot efficacy trial. *Substance Abuse*, 30, 295-305. In the first randomized controlled trial to examine the impact of an 8-week mindfulness intervention in a population of substance abusers, participants demonstrated lower rates of substance use, greater decreases in craving, and increases in acceptance and acting with awareness compared to participants in a treatment as usual control group.

Hong, Y. (2008). *Tai Chi Chuan: State of the Art in International Research*. Basel: Karger.

This edited volume includes reports of 22 research studies conducted around the world that examined the impact of taiji quan on physical and mental health outcomes. Studied outcomes include: biomechanical and physiological processes, balance control and falls prevention, mental health and well-being, and clinical applications for Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, coronary heart disease, chronic heart failure, breast cancer survivors, and rheumatoid arthritis. This volume is the most comprehensive summary of research evidence published in English supporting taiji quan as a means for fostering physical and mental health and well-being.

Hung, J.W., Liou, C.W., Wang, P.W., Yeh, S.H., Lin, L.W., Lo, S.K., & Tsai, F.M. (2009). Effect of 12-week tai chi chuan exercise on peripheral nerve modulation in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*, 41, 924-929. Participants with type 2 diabetes mellitus who participated in taiji quan treatment demonstrated improved fasting

blood glucose and increased nerve conduction velocities in all nerves tested compared to healthy adults who served as controls.

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Qin, Z., Jin, Y., Lin, S., & Hermanowicz, N.S. (2009). A forty-five year follow-up EEG study of qigong practice. *International Journal of Neuroscience*, 119, 538-552. In a rare long-term study of qigong practice, a 76 year old Chinese male with 50 years of qigong experience (focused attention on breathing) was examined 45 years after an earlier EEG assessment. Two Caucasian males (76 and 72 years old) with 26 and 25 years of meditation experience, respectively, served as meditator (mantra meditation) controls. Six Chinese septuagenarians (4 male and 2 female) served as non-meditator controls. Results concerning enhanced alpha wave activity among meditators suggest that long-term meditation practice may change EEG patterns and their underlying neurophysiology.

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vention in Korea resulted in significantly reduced fasting glucose and HbA1c and better diabetic self-care, quality of mental life and social functioning compared to participants who failed to adhere to the taiji practice.

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Reviews of Research

Chen, K.W., Liu, T., Zhang, H., Lin, Z. (2009). An analytical review of the Chinese literature on qigong therapy for diabetes mellitus. *The American Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 37, 439-457. Thirty-five research studies examining qigong as a treatment for diabetes mellitus, most of which were conducted and published in China, were reviewed. All studies report some therapeutic effect, but few of the studies adhered to Western standards of scientific research.

Hall, A., Maher, C., Latimer, J., & Ferreira, M. (2009). The effectiveness of tai chi for chronic musculoskeletal pain conditions: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Arthritis & Rheumatism*, 61, 717-724. Meta-analysis of seven randomized controlled trials revealed that taiji quan significantly reduced pain and disability and enhanced satisfaction with general health.

Ledesma, D., & Kumano, H. (2009). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and cancer: A meta-analysis. *Psycho-Oncology*, 18, 571-579. Meta-analysis of 10 randomized controlled trials and observational studies revealed that mindfulness significantly improved the psychosocial adjustment of cancer patients to their disease with moderate effect sizes and significantly improved physical health but with smaller effect sizes.

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Yeh, G.Y., Wang, C., Wayne, P.M., & Phillips, R. (2009). Tai chi exercise for patients with cardiovascular conditions and risk factors. *Journal of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation and Prevention*, 29, 152-160. Twenty-nine randomized controlled trials, non-randomized studies, and observational trials published in English and Chinese were narratively reviewed. Most studies reported improvement including reduction of blood pressure (systolic and diastolic), resting heart rate, and arrhythmias, and enhanced exercise capacity, pulmonary function, flexibility, mood, and quality of life.

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